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## Journal des débats



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

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

**Québec, Tuesday, November 6, 1990**

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Chairman: Mr. Michel Bélanger

# Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec

Québec city, Tuesday, November 6, 1990

## Opening Sitting

(10:18 a.m.)

### Mandate and Operation of the Commission

Mr. Michel Bélanger

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I declare open this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec.

Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Opposition Leader, ladies and gentlemen, the public sittings of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec begin today. This opening meeting will give members of the Commission the opportunity to indicate what they expect of this undertaking and explain the attitudes they intend to adopt in the coming months. This opening ceremony affords the chairman the opportunity to inform Quebecers of the mandate and operation of the Commission, briefly review the organization of its deliberations, and examine a number of essential facets of the context in which the inquiry is being carried out.

In accordance with a rule adopted by the chairmen, we will alternately preside over public sittings, in alphabetical order. Only one of us will chair each session; I am presiding at today's meeting by virtue of this rule. However, Mr. Campeau and I will jointly deliver the opening address. I will present the first and third parts and Mr. Campeau, the second part and the conclusion, which summarizes our shared viewpoints.

The Commission was created by the National Assembly on September 4, 1990 and has received a clear, precise mandate to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and present a report containing recommendations by March 28, 1991. The mandate is significant and broad and it is incumbent upon all of us to fulfil it in the full awareness of why the Commission was set up. Indeed, the mandate arises from a unique historical and political context. It has been engendered by a remarkable consensus among Quebecers, animated by the Government and the Opposition. In the wake of the failed Meech Lake Accord it is Quebecers who will determine Québec's political and constitutional status. Québec will decide its future.

The National Assembly decided unanimously to establish the Commission, a unique body whose mandate is exceptional. The Commission is made up of elected and non-elected members. Its mandate acknowledges that Quebecers are free to assume their own destiny, determine their political status, and ensure their economic, social and cultural development.

While the Commission's mandate points resolutely to the future, it reflects Québec's unfailing attachment to democratic values and human rights and freedoms. It broadens a number of hopes which must not be dashed.

The failure on June 23, 1990 of the Meech Lake constitutional accord has left Québec and Canada in an impasse. Québec has attempted in vain to convince its partners in Confederation of the legitimacy and soundness of its minimal conditions for adhering with dignity to the Constitution Act, 1982 and its efforts have been shattered. The resulting stalemate is a source of instability. The Commission must examine the reasons for and consequences of this deadlock for Québec, draw the necessary conclusions, and contemplate the redefinition of Québec's political and constitutional status. What we are seeking is a new definition of the relationship between Québec and Canada and of Québec's place inside or "beside" Canada.

It is indeed an honour to introduce the members of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. The Commission is made up of 36 members, half of whom are Members of the National Assembly. Aside from Prime Minister Robert Bourassa and Opposition Leader Jacques Parizeau, 16 members of the Commission are MNAs, nine of whom represent the government party, and six, the official opposition party. The representatives of the government party are: Louise Bégin, Guy Bélanger, Claude Dauphin, Claire-Hélène Hovington, Cosmo Maciocia, who has probably been delayed by the snowstorm, Christiane Pelchat, Gil Rémillard, Claude Ryan, and Russell Williams.

The representatives of the official opposition party are: Jeanne Blackburn, Jacques Brassard, Guy Chevrete, Louise Harel, and Pauline Marois.

Richard Holden represents the other opposition party, whose leader, Robert Libman, is also participating in the Commission. Each MNA may designate another MNA to replace him or her.

Thirteen members represent various sectors of society; each one has a permanent replacement. Jean-Louis Desrosiers (replaced today by Jean-Claude Baugier) - I see that I overlooked Mr. Jacques Léonard, whose name indeed appears on my list. My apologies, Mr. Léonard - and Roger Nicolet are elected municipal officers; Marcel Beaudry, Cheryl Campbell Steer, Ghislain Dufour and Charles-Albert Poissant represent the business sector; Louis Laberge, who will no doubt join us shortly, Gérald Larose, Lorraine Pagé, and Jacques Proulx, who reached us in the snowstorm, the trade union sector; Claude



Béland, the cooperative sector; Serge Turgeon, the cultural sector; and Guy d'Anjou, the educational sector.

Three members of the House of Commons of Canada, Lucien Bouchard, Jean-Pierre Hogue and André Ouellet, are also members of the Commission. Following the chairmen's speech, each member of the Commission will speak, starting with the Prime Minister and followed by the Leader of the Official Opposition.

In terms of its organization, the Commission has three components, each with clearly defined responsibilities: the chairmanship, the steering committee, and the secretariat. Mr. Campeau and I are responsible for overseeing the deliberations of the Commission and ensuring that its decisions are acted upon. We also preside over sittings, participate in the Commission's deliberations, and have the right to vote. During public sittings, our main task will be to ensure that the Commission listens attentively and that a broad range of viewpoints are objectively expressed. We intend to fulfil our role in this manner until the Commission has completed its work.

The steering committee is made up of both chairmen, six MNAs and a representative of other members of the Commission. The MNAs sitting on the committee are Guy Bélanger, Jacques Brassard, Guy Chevette, Claude Dauphin, Christiane Pelchat, and Gil Rémillard. Claude Béland represents the other members of the Commission.

The steering committee is responsible for proposing to the Commission various rules governing, in particular, invitations to appear before the Commission and the organization of sittings, and procedures related to its deliberations. Under these rules, it is incumbent upon the steering committee to select the briefs which will be heard at public sittings.

Henri-Paul Rousseau, Secretary of the Commission, is responsible for the secretariat, whose staff receive briefs and conduct an initial analysis of them on behalf of Commission members. The Secretary is also responsible for the Commission's travel arrangements, administration and communications. The Secretary directs staff, deals with day-to-day business, and attends meetings of the steering committee and sittings of the Commission. He is responsible for the Commission's archives, coordinating research, and writing various documents.

#### Mr. Jean Campeau

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We are well aware that each member brings to the Commission his or her personal and political opinions and experiences. However, we are also aware that the Commission's mandate is too fundamental to be overshadowed by partisan concerns.

Clearly, in the course of the Commission's deliberations, openmindedness, an awareness of what is at stake, and the quest for a vital consensus must prevail.

We will strive to merit the confidence and meet the expectations of Quebecers. In this regard, we must fulfil our mandate perspicaciously and generously. Our sole concern must be the well-being of all Quebecers.

The chairmen will ensure that the Commission listens to what Quebecers from all walks of life have to say about Québec's political and constitutional status.

Of course, the task is a daunting one. Some facets of the constitutional debate are complex. Often, the meaning of a word, an expression or a sentence can easily be taken out of context and distorted. We must all be precise when expressing ourselves and attentive when others are speaking. We must avoid sterile rhetoric and earnestly seek a consensus.

(10:30 a.m.)

The public sittings of the Commission will be televised, thus enabling all Quebecers to take part in this process.

The members of the Commission have decided to launch their inquiry with a far-reaching public consultation. Quebecers are the very focal point of the Commission's deliberations; for this reason, we felt it logical to respect their desire to participate fully in redefining their political and constitutional future. However, public sittings are obviously not the only means of achieving this end. Various experts, such as sociologists, political scientists, jurists, economists, historians, and representatives of the arts, literary and cultural communities have been asked to contribute to the inquiry. Members of the Commission and the steering committee have already taken part in a series of preparatory meetings; other such meetings will be organized in the course of the Commission's deliberations. The Commission may also organize forums on particular topics.

Public sittings are the first and by no means the least significant stage in the Commission's inquiry. They start today and will continue for 22 days in a number of regions of Québec. By Christmas, the Commission will have more or less covered Québec, from Abitibi-Témiscamingue to the Estrie region, from the Outaouais to the Côte-Nord regions, not to mention the Bas-Saint-Laurent-Gaspésie, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, Mauricie-Bois-Francs, Québec City and Montréal regions.

The secretariat has received over 500 briefs, all of which will be analysed by members of the Commission and secretarial staff. Given the Commission's timetable, it will not, unfortunately, be possible to hear the authors of all of the briefs. In selecting briefs for presentation at public sittings, the steering committee seeks those which are most

representative, with particular emphasis on diverse viewpoints and lucid arguments.

It should be noted that the viewpoints expressed will be those of bodies or individuals who are entirely free and responsible for their opinions. It is not simply because such viewpoints are heard that they will be countenanced or adopted by the Commission.

Presentations by individuals and bodies are governed by rules. We will ensure compliance with these rules. Bodies and individuals invited to appear before the Commission will be informed in advance how much time has been allotted to them. Members of the Commission will have examined the briefs prior to their presentation and will have in mind questions on various topics dealt with in the briefs. Public sittings will vary in length. Bodies presenting briefs will be accorded 60 minutes or 90 minutes, depending on the decision of the steering committee; individuals will be allowed 30 minutes. The steering committee will decide how much time to grant experts and specialists. During the time allotted, the authors will briefly summarize their briefs and members of the Commission will ask them questions.

#### Questions Put to Experts

The Commission's public sittings begin today, although staff in the secretariat have already been at work for several weeks. Initial reflection and discussions have raised a number of questions about which the Commission wishes to obtain the opinion of experts. Two weeks ago, the Commission asked nearly 100 experts in the arts, literary and cultural communities to answer the following questions:

First question: What are the main problems facing Québec with regard to its political and constitutional status?

Second question: In what areas could and should Québec enjoy, first, full jurisdiction and second, coexistent or shared jurisdiction?

Third question: Explain the impact of your answer to question 2 on the maintenance and promotion of the Québec identity.

Fourth question: Explain the impact of your answer to question 2 on the maintenance and promotion of the standard of living of Quebecers, bearing in mind economic, commercial, fiscal, financial and monetary factors.

Fifth question: In the case of shared jurisdiction, indicate the partner(s) involved.

Sixth question: In the case of shared jurisdiction, which institutions and arbitration procedures should be emphasized? Explain why.

Seventh question: What are the implications of your answers to the preceding questions with regard to the political and constitutional status of Québec?

Eighth and final question: Which historical experiences of economic integration and

interdependence and political affirmation are most relevant to Québec? What conclusions do you draw from them?

In early December, the Commission will publish a list of the experts who have accepted its invitation. Their responses will be made public. Some of the experts will subsequently appear before the Commission, probably in December, to share their viewpoints with us. These questions do not exclude any political option.

Two basic concerns will guide our deliberations, which are being conducted in an international economic and political environment which we cannot disregard. To do otherwise would render our task illusory and futile. Moreover, the undertaking reflects Québec's political affirmation, part of a lengthy historical process which must soon be resolved if we are to avoid devoting to it our most creative energies and resources.

The report of the Commission must reflect an awareness of the fundamental changes occurring around the world. It must also reflect the desire of Quebecers to maintain and promote their identity.

#### Opening Statements

##### Mr. Michel Bélanger

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Every day, we are aware of the global village. The goods we consume, the trips we take and, above all, the information we absorb are all reminders of the fundamental changes which are markedly altering the planet. Eastern Europe has changed radically, East and West Germany have reunited quickly, the USSR is overhauling its political and economic system, and Western Europe is moving toward closer unity.

The world economy is undergoing profound, irreversible changes. Since the end of World War II, freer trade has been gathering momentum. This trend continues today and has undoubtedly contributed by and large to raising the standard of living in this century. Moreover, through communications technology and deregulation, financial markets have become increasingly integrated and unified. The removal of constraints on foreign investment in a number of countries has spurred economic growth and accelerated the transfer of knowledge and technology. Consumers the world over are aware of the nature and quality of goods produced in other countries. They want to obtain these goods at the best possible price.

Economic barriers are toppling one by one, leading to the globalization of markets. To deny this fact or the extent of the phenomenon, or to think that we can protect our standard of living and that of our children by resorting to isolationist measures would be a grave mistake.

We must, to the contrary, find ways to successfully participate in this new global environment. We must bear in mind the globalization of markets, which will unquestionably affect the role of the State. Regardless of the political system, whether a single State, a federation, a confederation, or associated States, the globalization of markets is shifting to international bodies and to consumers a part of the sovereignty of nations.

In an age of global markets governments frequently engage in reciprocal agreements. If governments accept these transfers of sovereignty, it is because they deem it preferable to voluntarily relinquish part of their sovereignty with the knowledge that clear rules govern their dealings with other governments, rather than fully exercising their sovereignty in isolation, sustained by their political and economic weight alone.

The globalization of markets is accompanied by a remarkable revolution in the field of communications and information and is drawing decision-making power closer to ordinary individuals. Socialist and capitalist experts now acknowledge that decentralized management is more efficient than centralized management. Consumers and taxpayers usually prefer a personalized service rendered locally to a standardized service rendered impersonally according to standards established elsewhere and applicable to vast territories.

Our deliberations concern the future. We must contemplate the future, as the 20th century draws to a close, in light of the globalization of markets and the information revolution. If we stress the economic facets of the undertaking, it is not because these matters alone determine political and constitutional status, nor is it because they condition our standard of living. Indeed, our standard of living depends on several, interrelated factors. Our talents, natural resources, public policies and values, such as entrepreneurial spirit and the desire to succeed, and the vigour of the world economy, especially the vitality of our North American trading partners, directly affect our standard of living.

Given current worldwide competition, the Québec economy must achieve and maintain stringent control over production costs. In relation to the world economy, Québec's and Canada's economies are relatively small. Competitiveness is the key to market share, earnings and jobs. Obviously, neither our continued adherence to the federal system nor achieving sovereignty will in themselves protect our standard of living. In both cases, Québec will remain an open economy in which foreign trade is a key to its success. Moreover, external shocks such as worldwide economic fluctuations, changing resource prices, and conditions on North American financial markets will affect us appreciably and demand considerable adaptability.

Entrepreneurship, the quality of our human resources, and cooperation will decisively affect our economic well-being.  
(10:45 a.m.)

While there is no unequivocal link between political status and standard of living, there is a relationship between political uncertainty and economic performance. At times of uncertainty, consumers, investors and merchants put off making decisions because they are not fully aware of the rules of the game. For this reason, we must curtail uncertainty and show, through our deliberations, that Québec will continue to abide by recognized economic rules and honour its commitments. We cannot underestimate the economic problems spawned by transitional periods and constitutional changes. We must adopt a balanced, thoughtful stance with regard to economic matters.

Constitutional and economic issues are inextricably linked and we will soon have to meet other challenges. In recent years, a number of new social problems have emerged and others have become more acute. Privat and public-sector initiatives and resources must be devoted to solving these problems. The family, young people, health care, immigration, housing, the elderly, and income security are all demanding increasing attention. Satisfactory solutions will have to be found within the political framework Québec decides to adopt.

An ageing population and its expectations concerning access to high-quality services will decisively affect the future of Québec society. We must remember that political and economic institutions are not ends in themselves but the means of enhancing living conditions which maintain dignity and equal opportunities.

Minority groups and the underprivileged, regardless of origin and social stratum, who are often the victims of discrimination, all have a place in a free Québec society, whose distinct nature is completely unambiguous.

The status of the French language and the language rights of minorities, support for artists, and the place occupied by the ethnic and linguistic minorities which enrich the fabric of Québec society must remain at the forefront of our deliberations. Québec is the only enclave in North America where French is the language of the majority and it must master the means of ensuring its cultural development.

**Mr. Jean Campeau**

**The Chairman (Mr. Campeau):** The Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec will successfully meet the challenge before it. Together, we will delineate the essential facets of Québec's future political status. Let us clearly state that we are not negotiating with Canada or any part of it, nor are we a group of experts whose mandate is to

define all of the technical aspects of our constitutional future. Our role is to make recommendations to the National Assembly on the political and constitutional status of Québec. We will succeed provided that our proposals concerning Québec's status rally the support of a clear majority of the Commission's members.

Because our deliberations are largely public, they will encourage Quebecers to reflect on these matters and pave the way for subsequent political initiatives. Envisaged in this manner, our mandate can be carried out by March 28, 1991. The chairmen will do everything possible to ensure that the broad issues are known by Christmas.

We would like to encourage the news media to help us fulfil our mandate. We seek open, forthright, honest discussion. The media will have an important role to play, as they will disseminate vital information on the key issues, and elevate debate above partisan considerations. We ask you to help us make this undertaking a resounding success.

All members of the Commission are invited to display generosity during discussions. May the desire to succeed make us strive for solidarity and honesty. The Commission's inquiry is public and open to the world. May it serve to illustrate our attachment to democracy and freedom.

Ladies and gentlemen, let us work together and work efficiently. Let us take a decisive step forward in the process of Québec's political affirmation. May our inquiry demonstrate that Québec knows what it wants. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I would now like to ask Prime Minister Robert Bourassa to speak.

**Mr. Robert Bourassa**

**Mr. Bourassa:** Messrs. Chairmen, ladies and gentlemen, my first words are obviously to thank you, Messrs. Bélanger and Campeau and your entire team, for the remarkable work you have accomplished until now. There are 150 days remaining before the conclusion of your deliberations and the submission of the report, but it is indeed reassuring to note the efficiency with which you have worked until now.

We decided to create this broad parliamentary commission which, I believe, sets a precedent in the history of Québec, after examining a number of options. We considered a traditional parliamentary commission. Given the exceptional nature of the situation, we concluded that we had to find another formula. The establishment of an Estates General was suggested. Because we believe that the National Assembly is the central institution in Québec, we decided that it was preferable to include the National Assembly in this basic process of reflection on our future. Thus, we have

established this broad parliamentary commission, made up of a majority of Members of the National Assembly.

Allow me, ladies and gentlemen, to stress the collaboration of the Leader of the Opposition in this undertaking. During the summer, we agreed upon most points. Obviously, we agreed to disagree in some respects, although it can generally be said that the Commission has resulted from a collaborative effort. There is one point on which both parties clearly agreed, and that is the importance of the economic question and – you referred earlier to the matter, Mr. Chairman Bélanger – the priority which must be given to strengthening the Québec economy.

We know that Québec is a distinct society; in economic terms, it is becoming increasingly open to the world. Whatever happens, Québec will obviously remain a distinct society and, for us, it must also remain a worthwhile place for all investors. This, we acknowledge, is essential for our social and cultural progress. It is essential if our young people are to remain confident in their own economic future. It is also increasingly important in terms of tackling growing government debt resulting from burgeoning spending accompanied by fairly stable revenues or slighter reductions in revenues because of the impact of international competition on production costs. In this respect, there are economic links between Québec and the rest of Canada, bearing in mind the North American context which must be examined realistically. There is the question of monetary union, widely discussed until now. The current situation in Europe is noteworthy, as is the question of the democratic legitimacy of the central bank. Your experts will undoubtedly express valuable viewpoints in this respect.

I have always maintained that, in terms of the economic progress essential to our future, there exists an internal dynamic between the acceptance of a customs union, which leads to the acceptance of a common market and a monetary union, and the extent to which the monetary and political unions can and must be linked. We cannot overlook the very recent example of Germany, where monetary union has certainly contributed to some degree to political union. We find in this example all the advantages of threefold mobility: the mobility of goods, the mobility of persons, and the mobility of capital. What political structure must be used to support this threefold mobility?

These remarks, ladies and gentlemen, are intended to explain the importance we wish to accord the economic facet of our reflection. Independently of this aspect, allow me to turn to the more specific *raison d'être* of this Commission. I will be brief as everyone is already well aware of it.

Last June 22, we noted with regret that the

Meech Lake Accord, despite its very moderate, reasonable nature, was rejected, although it had been signed several times by all the provincial premiers and the prime minister of Canada. Need we repeat that the accord was designed to reintegrate Québec into Canada and give the Constitution Act, 1982, which was imposed on us, the legitimacy it did not have. In my view, the failure of the Meech Lake Accord has discredited the existing process of constitutional review in Canada. We can no longer trust the constitutional negotiating and review procedures involving 11 governments. This is what I said last June 23.

I also stated at that time that the Meech Lake Accord was a test of English Canada's desire to understand Québec and that the decision to reject it logically called into question our political future. This parliamentary commission is legitimate and exceptional. The Commission will have to focus on Québec's political future. Québec's constitutional and political status is at stake and the National Assembly is asking the Commission to make an historic contribution to define various facets of its status.

(11 a.m.)

Around this table are assembled, in a unique institution, Quebecers who have a very important responsibility for our future. Obviously, the task is a hard one, but the challenge is exciting. Today, we are undertaking an unprecedented consultation, involving all Quebecers and various experts. The mandate given to you by the National Assembly is a broad one. You must study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and formulate recommendations, as stipulated in the legislation which created the Commission.

While you pursue your deliberations and formulate your recommendations, you will have to take into consideration, first and foremost, what we are. As I noted earlier, you will also have to take into account major international trends, mention of which was also made by the chairmen: the globalization of markets, associations of States, the establishment of supranational structures, and the growth of nationalism. One of the major challenges facing this Commission will be to reconcile these seemingly contradictory forces and trends which appear to separate peoples but actually draw them closer together.

The discussion and reflection we are initiating can hardly exclude any problems or options. All of Québec society's needs will be analysed in the coming months. Quebecers will indicate what they feel are the best means of satisfying such needs.

It is, however, likely that the Commission will focus in particular on needs closely tied to protecting and promoting Québec's specific character. The identification and recognition of

our difference and distinct character is an historical trait of the constitutional initiatives and demands of all governments. The means employed have certainly varied, but we have always fought to achieve acceptance of the fact that we remain what we are. The procedures and powers essential for maintaining and developing the specific character of Québec are a vital field in which the National Assembly must be sovereign.

As the beige paper noted, under the authority of its government, Québec society has developed in recent years a framework for living and a network of institutions which are the increasingly full expression of its distinct culture. In Québec, legislation, the legal system, the media, the arts and literature, the education system, the social services network, religious institutions, and credit unions are quintessentially French, by virtue of the language and the culture which permeate them.

For several years Québec has also displayed strong democratic values and great respect for individual rights and freedoms in the pursuit of collective interests. The debate we are undertaking must take into consideration the important role of the English-speaking community, Native peoples and the cultural communities in the development of Québec. Protecting and promoting our language, culture and distinct identity will pose a more significant, daunting challenge than ever, given the predominance of English in contemporary communications and the demographic and migratory factors which directly affect this challenge.

For example, how can we protect and promote Québec's identity without the power and the ability to act effectively with respect to the demographic and migratory factors which will literally fashion the Québec of tomorrow? The fact that Québec has effective powers in these sectors will determine its ability to act effectively in four major areas of great importance to its future: the achievement of a new demographic balance, economic prosperity, the preservation of the French fact, and openness to the world. Immigration enriches Québec society and facilitates its openness to the world. The contribution of immigration to achieving a new demographic balance is undeniable and is a crucial factor in maintaining our relative weight in Canada and North America.

From an economic standpoint, immigration makes possible the injection of new capital and can foster economic growth. Obviously, policies governing the reception and linguistic integration of immigrants must ensure that new Quebecers adopt the language of the majority. We must control the number of immigrants and develop our ability to receive them. There are other examples of powers which are crucial to our

development, related in particular to vocational training and communications. These powers are tied to the distinct nature of Québec and, at the same time, are designed to reduce the duplication of services.

The Commission must therefore reflect the makeup of Québec society, tolerant but determined, rigorous but imbued with freedom and respectful of the pluralistic nature of our society. The social and political maturity of Quebecers must inform our discussions. The functions, experience and titles of members of the Commission make it possible to adequately and legitimately represent all Quebecers, defend and vigorously promote, in an enlightened manner, Québec's primordial interests.

We will approach this Commission with confidence, realism and openness. Confidence, because Québec has demonstrated throughout its history that it is capable of meeting the challenges imposed on it. We have only to look at the remarkable development of the past 30 years. Realism, because Québec must be up to date. We cannot shy away from economic interdependence. Openness, because do not wish to draw conclusions before listening to various viewpoints. We hope that this attitude will be shared by the greatest possible number of Quebecers. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. I now call upon Mr. Jacques Parizeau, Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Jacques Parizeau**

**Mr. Parizeau:** Mr. Chairmen, members of the Commission, this morning I would like as far as I am able to speak on behalf of all those in Québec who are now seeking to profoundly alter our political system. If so many Quebecers had not reacted in this manner, the Commission might never have been established. This is because, at present, so many Quebecers look at Québec's sovereignty as their path to the future that we feel, in some respects, compelled to answer them. Some will respond in one way, others in another. However, there are a number of questions which demand response. Today, this is probably the main question facing Quebecers. An attempt has often been made to define sovereignty as an outmoded solution, one not centred on the future. However, for many years we have seen to what extent the notion of sovereignty is widespread and has ultimately altered political structures everywhere.

Thirty years ago, decolonization led to the establishment of scores of sovereign nations. In Eastern Europe, various countries have of late been reaffirming their sovereignty, which they had nominally lost, along with most of the veritable attributes of sovereignty. Now, these

Baltic countries are seeking to recover the sovereignty they lost 50 years ago. Even the USSR is seeking a possible solution to its current problems through sovereignty. Quebecers are aware of this fact.

Quebecers are fully aware that, despite what is often claimed, sovereignty is, at present, one of the leading political questions. In Québec, of course, the question is posed somewhat differently from what we have seen in many other countries of the world. I believe that for a growing number of Quebecers, sovereignty is in some ways an outcome. The failure of Meech Lake can never be entirely swept under the constitutional carpet, here or in English Canada. Everything is happening as though, with the collapse of the Meech Lake Accord, a new perception has developed in Québec to the effect that this really was federalism's last chance. This brings us to sovereignty, now that the other solutions have been exhausted.

What, in fact, is sovereignty? We must be clear on this question. The sovereignty of a country is its ability to ensure that it collects all taxes paid by its citizens. Sovereignty also means controlling all legislation. Sovereignty is also the power to negotiate all treaties binding one country to its neighbours or other nations. That is what sovereignty is.

It has always struck me as astonishing that the support of Quebecers for each of these three measures taken separately – as revealed for a long time by surveys, for example – is always very high. For a long time, everything happened as though Quebecers were ready to accept sovereignty in its details, i.e. all taxes or control over legislation, but were more reticent when faced with the word sovereignty. At present, such hesitation is collapsing.

What sovereignty will offer Quebecers is the possibility, if we return to the basics, of managing their own affairs bearing in mind their own interests, thus abandoning various forms of arbitration where, in the minority, they have often submitted themselves to policies which were not of their own devising and which they do not accept. It also means ensuring their future as they see fit.

Sovereignty defined in this manner, however, implies a risk, one which could be quite serious. More precisely, there is a risk of looking inward, of becoming self-centred. To avoid such a risk, it is vital that we be open to the world and to economic association.  
(11:15 a.m.)

Essentially, what prevents a people which becomes sovereign from looking inward is the need, at present, to engage in all forms of economic association. However, perhaps another major trait of our times, aside from sovereignty, is that we have ensured that small countries can exist, live, prosper and develop within large economic units. This is the major discovery of

our age. We now know that one can be Danish or a Luxemburger within the European Economic Community in the same way that one can be a Quebecer in a big North American market.

These factors were discussed at length during the debate on free trade between Canada and the United States. From an economic standpoint, this test of free trade, the veritable test of this debate, just like the test of sovereignty, is the insistence on being competitive in the big market and ensuring that one constantly displays an ability to stay competitive outside one's own territory. To some extent, this is the best way of avoiding looking inward. Obviously, in the case of Canada, the economic association of a sovereign Québec with Canada can, and I am convinced, will focus on a broad array of issues: monetary union, of course, and, inevitably, a customs union; transportation, certainly; and probably communications.

There are numerous fields in which a sovereign Québec will have to delegate a number of powers or even resources. However, in order to delegate, you must possess these powers. We cannot delegate what we do not have. With what framework are these types of economic association to be accepted? In a framework which is mutually advantageous for both parties. Let us not delude ourselves, only the economic interests of both parties will ensure the methods of association, the number of methods of association, and the characteristics of this association. Without common interests, economic association will only go so far; then there will be areas in which mutual advantage exists, and probably methods of economic association. This is part of history. It is now inherent, as was mentioned earlier this morning, in the globalization of markets.

However, Mr. Chairman, mentioning economic association, stressing the need, at this time, for economic association, does not in itself infer political association. I think it will be one of the Commission's major tasks to clarify this matter. The prime minister referred several minutes ago to it; we will have to agree on the meaning of words. When we say association, do we mean economic association or political association?

I would like to speak briefly about political association because I occasionally have the impression that there is a strong temptation to give federalism yet another last chance, that is, to revive federalism by suggesting changes in it. This has been going on for 45 years. For 45 years, Québec and its successive governments have been discussing with Ottawa and the other provinces changes in the Canadian Constitution and changes in federalism without ever achieving much success, when such changes meant that Québec would obtain broader powers. We are now living under an extremely heavy burden of

history. I believe the Commission will have to refresh the memory of Quebecers.

It is somewhat distressing to observe this series of failures, this series of hopes in Québec which are always disappointed. I have the impression that many Quebecers deem the latest disappointment to be the last. Regardless of the political changes we contemplate today, we should at least remember one thing: these political changes must be adopted within the current Canadian framework and the current constitutional framework. The provinces which did not want to recognize that Québec is a distinct society will not acknowledge that because of this distinct character, Québec has and must have more powers. What elicited a "no" when Québec had fewer powers will not elicit a "yes" when it has more. Many of the changes related to political association which are sometimes envisaged at present — let there be no doubt — must be approved unanimously by the provinces; in other instances, seven provinces accounting for at least half the population of Canada must approve.

Several months after the failure of the Meech Lake Accord on January [sic] 23, we must reflect that were we to sit down again with the other provinces, we must not lose sight of the fact that it is the same provinces who will say "yes" or "no". Thus, political association and all attempts at altering political association are merely a sort of status quo which is not yet recognized as such. If such is not the case, I believe the burden of proof concerning the feasibility of the operation rests with those who are seeking to once again instigate changes within the Canadian political framework. After so many failures, if we wish to begin again, those who wish to recommence should at least bear the burden of proof to show that the operation is the least bit feasible.

In any event, Québec's sovereignty is the only deep-seated, fundamental political gesture that Quebecers can pose without being subject to the acceptance of the rest of Canada. In the name of the right of peoples to dispose of themselves, the declaration of Québec's sovereignty is the only basic, profound political gesture that Quebecers can pose themselves without demanding permission from anyone else.

To conclude, economic association is the basic requirement of our age. We cannot get around this fact. It is obvious that Québec cannot in any way contemplate turning back with regard to its current demands. We must clearly make the first gesture, that is, sovereignty, to be able to discuss and negotiate the second, that is, economic association. I believe that we are going to have to take a stand quickly in this respect.

It is worth noting the pressure which has been exerted for some time on Quebecers by the business community which is asking them to

make up their minds. We must clarify the matter. Let us not spend years obscuring the issues and confusing concepts. The choice to be made must, I feel, be clearly set out and made quickly. The resulting gestures will, I think, be made in the right order, while maintaining everything necessary for Québec's prosperity, but with the addition of many other levers we do not currently control and which are essential to Québec's material prosperity and to its social development.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Parizeau. Next, we will hear Messrs. Rémillard, Brassard, Ryan, Chevette, Béland, Bélanger and Dauphin, and Mrs. Pelchat. We will then hear the remaining members in alphabetical order, beginning with Mr. Beaudry. I now call on Mr. Gil Rémillard.

**Mr. Gil Rémillard**

**Mr. Rémillard:** Thank you, thank you Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairmen. It is here, in this room on December 12, 1985, nearly five years ago, that I was sworn in as Minister responsible for Canadian Intergovernmental Affairs. At that time, Prime Minister Bourassa asked me to approach the federal and provincial governments with a view to reaching a constitutional agreement to enable Québec to once again become a full-fledged partner in Confederation, in the wake of the repatriation of the Constitution in 1982, carried out without Québec's participation.

During a speech I gave in May 1986 in Mont-Gabriel, I spelled out the five conditions underlying Québec's constitutional position. The five conditions were the most reasonable ones ever set forth by a Québec government. We agreed to first lay the groundwork before building the house. We were well aware that the discussions would be arduous, very arduous. Moreover, we knew that if we failed, the alternate solutions would have to be more categorical. The federal and provincial governments were well informed, very well informed, of our intentions. We also fully apprised them of the consequences of failure. At the request of Prime Minister Bourassa, I met several times with the premiers and ministers responsible for the question to impress upon them that the failure of Meech Lake would leave Québec no alternative but to make a more radical, decisive choice.

(11:30 a.m.)

In many of the provinces, the failure of Meech Lake is looked upon as a banal constitutional failure, similar to others which have occurred over the past 30 years. This is an erroneous analysis based on a faulty perception of the situation in Québec. The failure of Meech Lake is not banal; to the contrary, it has instigated with the work of this Commission

today an unprecedented process in our history, one which will certainly significantly alter Québec's constitutional status.

Last June 23, with the demise of the Meech Lake Accord, it is in this very room that Prime Minister Bourassa stated that from now on, federalism involving 11 partners was finished. We will no longer agree to negotiate as one against ten, especially with the knowledge that the signatures of some premiers are not worth much more than the paper on which they appear. Let us turn the page and look to the future, without bitterness, but with the pride and determination which have always characterized Quebecers. Our parliamentary commission can be the ideal way to reach the necessary decisions, free of all political partisanship. After over 30 years of futile discussions, Quebecers everywhere are now clearly saying to us: Enough is enough, let us reach our own decisions. Indeed, Quebecers alone and no-one else must decide about their future.

Among the matters we must broach during the course of our deliberations, it strikes me that four questions are especially important. The first question we must ask is certainly that of deciding what has been accomplished after 30 years of unavailing constitutional talks. Jean Lesage's slogan "maîtres chez nous" has probably now taken on its full meaning and, I might add, its proper perspective. After "equality or independence", "cultural sovereignty", "sovereignty-association" and the Meech Lake Accord, we have come full circle, to some extent, but enriched by the experience of the past 30 years.

A second question must, I feel, be asked: Which values in our society do we wish to emphasize? As Quebecers, we are distinct within the Canadian Federation, on the North American continent, and in the world. We are distinct not only because of our language and culture, but with regard to many facets of our way of life and institutions. However, as a free, democratic society, we share a common commitment to the fairest society possible, a society in which each individual enjoys the fullest guarantee of respect for his rights and freedoms, a society which seeks the well-being of its citizens through economic security, prosperity based on equal opportunities for one and all, and an economy which is open to international trade.

We are a tolerant society. Our nationalism is not predicated on xenophobia or self-centredness, but on openness to the world, openness to immigrants from around the world who wish to meet the challenge of our society. We are at once distinct and similar, as is the case with all other peoples on earth. We must fully express our distinction while sharing what we have in common. This is our first challenge.

We must ask ourselves a third question: Which jurisdictions, powers and means should we have at our disposal to express what we are and



share what we have in common? The powers and jurisdictions Québec enjoys under the Canadian Constitution are clearly inadequate. Indeed, in some respects, they are thwarting Québec's development.

A final, equally basic question must preside over our deliberations. How should we proceed to obtain the jurisdictions, powers and means which we need? Québec has been denied the five most reasonable conditions it has ever set. Is it realistic to believe that we can successfully negotiate the new jurisdictions, powers and means with the rest of Canada under the existing constitutional process? It is not merely a question of deciding what we want; we must also question ourselves about the process we wish to adopt, a process of continuity and of determination, one which will enable us to obtain what we need. The clearly expressed will of the Québec people must be our first reference.

Mr. Chairmen, I have confidence in the work of our Commission and I have confidence in Quebecers, a people which "does not know how to die" as Félix-Antoine Savard's character Menaud, the master of the river would have it, a proud, determined people which, when the time comes, will wisely, maturely reach the necessary decisions. I am deeply convinced that this time we will reach the right one. We are not the only people in the world to review our constitutional status. We must not exaggerate our situation. Just as in 1960 the international climate encouraged us to develop the features of a modern State, the current international situation draws us as a people, a nation, a society into an international movement of emergence centred on nationalism and essential links of association.

Mr. Chairmen, the challenge is an imposing one and I am convinced that our Commission will prove to be the ideal way to successfully meet it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I now invite Mr. Jacques Brassard to take the floor.

**Mr. Jacques Brassard**

**Mr. Brassard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that it is essential, from the outset, to draw lessons from the failure of the Meech Lake Accord at the very time when Québec has to determine - and the deliberations of this Commission will undoubtedly be very useful in this respect - and select a status and a political framework which will enable it to assume and ensure its development as a society, indeed as a nation.

Aside from its content, of whose slender, anemic nature we are all aware, the defunct Meech Lake Accord has become, to some extent, as much a symbol as the manifestation of the emergence of two nations engaged in a fundamental debate on their respective futures,

two nations opposing their respective visions and societal projects.

It has often been said that Meech has acted as a powerful mirror of a situation which people refused to acknowledge, at least one which some people refused to acknowledge. Despite the protestations of hypocrites in Canada and Québec, we will inevitably come up against this incontrovertible fact. The rejection by English Canada of Meech Lake has cast a glaring light on the basic incompatibility between the quest for a special status for Québec within the Canadian Federation and the English Canadian vision of the federal regime based on the 1982 Charter which places all of the provinces on an equal footing.

Thus, for many Quebecers, the demise of an agreement which included the weakest, most modest even, some will say, the most insignificant conditions related to constitutional reform put forward by a Québec government has indeed been perceived as the ultimate last chance for federalism. For over 30 years, Québec has been seeking a special status within Confederation which reflects its identity, culture and aspirations. Meech is a part of this long series of attempts, all of which have failed, and which were aimed at obtaining for Québec the additional powers needed to ensure its development.

Suffice it to mention the failure of the Fulton-Favreau formula in 1965, because of English Canada's refusal to share jurisdictions differently; the failure of the Victoria Conference in 1971, when Mr. Bourassa was refused sole jurisdiction for Québec over social security; and the Constitution Act, 1982 which imposed on Québec, without its consent, a charter of rights whose provisions curtailed the powers of the National Assembly, especially with respect to education and language.

The very people who struck this blow are now saying that a no to sovereignty would be interpreted as a yes for renewed federalism, proof positive of their boundless gall and scorn.

I will go so far as to say that the failure of Meech has clarified matters as it reduces to two the choices and options available to Québec. The first choice is to maintain the current regime as such, in which Québec is a province entirely like the others and accept and resign ourselves to this regime without changing it in any way. The other choice is sovereignty, which will enable us to obtain the jurisdictions and powers of a veritable country.

It is worth noting that in the indescribable jumble of notions, concepts and ideas currently littering the Québec political landscape, the idea of sovereignty is undoubtedly that which is at once the simplest and the clearest for what is sovereignty if not, quite simply, the three things the Leader of the Opposition mentioned earlier: first, the exclusive power of the National

Assembly to adopt legislation applying to Québec; second, the exclusive power to collect taxes from individuals and corporations in Québec; and third, the exclusive power to conclude treaties with other sovereign States.

Since its creation, the Parti Québécois has stressed this option. We have no intention, during the Commission's deliberations, of apologizing for or putting aside our convictions, although we will, of course, respect choices and options which differ from our own.

As for the choice of the government and its leader, it can be said that we know them now. If there was any doubt in this regard, such doubt has been dissipated. Mr. Bourassa is still a federalist. Of course, that is his right. As a result, his government is opting for the maintenance of federalism, while advocating a special status for Québec based, naturally, on a new sharing of powers, including immigration, vocational training and communications, about which he spoke earlier.

Mr. Bourassa dares to further complicate matters by adding a third tier, a supranational parliament which would oversee the Québec National Assembly and the legislatures of the other nine provinces, all under a federal parliament. The latter parliament would relinquish certain important powers in favour of a supranational superstructure.

Mr. Lévesque dubbed two-tiered federalism a "madhouse" and I wonder what he would call this surrealistic three-tiered architecture? A "haunted house", perhaps. Whether we choose baroque federalism or more classical federalism, we must be aware of the consequences of such a choice. For Quebecers, this means plunging into the constitutional morass for at least another three years. By choosing to remain federalist, by opting for a review of the current regime, by proposing a more or less complicated series of changes to the federal system, the government is compelled to manoeuvre within the current amending formula stipulated in the Canadian Constitution, whereby any change requires at worst the unanimous consent of all 11 parliaments and, at best, the support of at least seven provinces representing 50 percent of the population of Canada.  
(11:45 a.m.)

It must be clearly understood that we cannot simultaneously seek to remain within Confederation and bypass existing rules for altering it. Last June, Prime Minister Bourassa acknowledged that negotiations involving all 11 governments were completely discredited. Mr. Rémi Larivière stated recently, and here today, that (and I quote): "The system is corrupt, Québec has been trapped by the Constitution Act, 1982. This cannot go on. Federalism involving 11 partners is finished", end of quote. I would remind the minister and Quebecers that, if your proposal consists of renewing federalism and

thoroughly reviewing, for example, the sharing of powers, then you have no choice. You must again agree to let yourself be crushed by the infernal mechanics of negotiations involving 11 governments. This is inevitable. Under the circumstances, what reasonable likelihood is there that the sixteenth or the twentieth last chance for federalism, whether centred on a superstructure or not, will be adopted? In my opinion, there is no chance at all. It is a certain dead-end, an inescapable failure!

How can Québec, in all seriousness, under the same amending formula, claim to obtain more when it has been refused the very minimum? We must yield to the facts. English Canada has refused, refuses and will continue to refuse to grant Québec special status. As Claude Morin has said, it is the only option whose failure is assured in advance. At present, the Québec government is incapable of concluding bilateral administrative agreements in a number of areas, such as immigration or manpower. This means that even the temporary alternative to the failure of Meech is also a dismal failure.

For this reason, Mr. Chairman, I would like to express my belief - I do not think that it is unseemly or out of place to do so - that sovereignty alone will enable us to throw off the current constitutional yoke and the trap of the 1982 amending formula. Only sovereignty can establish - and this is, I trust, what we are seeking - a veritable balance of power in relation to Canada to negotiate, this time, as equals, the details of an economic association reflecting our mutual interests. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Brassard. I would like to remind everyone that each speaker is limited to 10 minutes. I did not mention it earlier. Fortunately, no-one has exceeded the time limit. I would now like to call on Mr. Christos Sirros, who is replacing Mr. Ryan. Mr. Sirros.

#### Mr. Christos Sirros

**Mr. Sirros:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman Bélanger, ladies and gentlemen. To begin, I would like to simply say that we do not intend, Mr. Chairman, to lampoon our partisan political positions because I think that we have reached an historic moment, an important moment, Mr. Chairman, in Québec's development, past, present and future. If, over the past 10 years of my involvement in Québec politics in the National Assembly I have often had the feeling that I was indeed present during important moments in our history, there is no doubt in anyone's mind that today we are taking part in such a moment. I feel especially privileged to participate in the inauguration of the deliberations of this Commission on the

constitutional future of Québec. As Mr. Ryan's replacement, I would also like to support the Québec government's willingness to foster a far-reaching debate on Québec's future.

This Commission, Mr. Chairman, is made up of members who represent the main sectors of activity in Québec society. Moreover, I would like to stress, as I did at the beginning, that this Commission may be qualified as non partisan, as all three parties in the National Assembly are represented on it, as well as four levels of government, thus, as I said, all sectors of society.

It is advisable that we do indeed reach a consensus in Québec society on the future course of Québec. The Commission will give all groups in society an opportunity to make representations and express their viewpoints. A tour of Québec is planned and will be undertaken to encourage the participation of all Quebecers concerned about Québec's future.

As much has been said about specificity, Mr. Chairman, I would like to take a few seconds or minutes to talk about mine, too. As Minister for Native Affairs and a member of the cultural communities, I would like to stress the importance of this Commission with regard to respect for cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity. I earnestly hope that it will make it possible to focus on Native peoples. This dimension of Québec society, this diversity and the situation of Native peoples, must always, in my view, be uppermost in the minds of all members of the Commission.

When we talk, for example, about the cultural communities, we must bear in mind that they are a factor which is growing in importance because of the demographic, economic, political and cultural impact exercised by such communities in our society. Mention is made of a situation which will have a growing impact on the functioning of society and its institutions; it is obvious that Québec will undergo major changes. The fact that these demographic changes are occurring at the same time that we are experiencing various constitutional changes, Mr. Chairman, makes the work of this Commission all the more important.

It is to be hoped that the Commission will serve as a focal point with respect to the definition of the traits we will give our society, regardless of the constitutional arrangement we decide on. Let us agree, once and for all, that there are no Quebecers by blood, that there are no first-class or second-class Quebecers, nor are there white, red, black or yellow Quebecers, that there are simply Quebecers with specific needs, Mr. Chairman. Under the circumstances, the Commission has a vital role to play by adopting the principles which will guide the elaboration of a model for society.

With particular reference to Native peoples, we must take into account that their presence is

a basic fact of our society. Québec has for a long time acknowledged the historical legitimacy of the presence of Native peoples here and recognizes their right to specificity. The fifteen principles adopted in 1983 and reaffirmed in 1988 in the National Assembly are proof of this observation. Québec deems it essential to maintain harmonious relations with Native peoples and build a relationship of mutual trust.

Any vision of an open, welcoming society must, at the outset, recognize the existence of aboriginal peoples within its territory, that is, recognize their distinct culture, language, customs and traditions. Native peoples must also participate fully in Québec's economic development. We respect their desire to govern themselves and develop their own identity, which is what distinguishes the Native peoples from Québec's cultural communities.

Native peoples must take their identity in hand by ensuring they have a territorial base and that they adapt the means of transmitting their culture. The challenge will be to ensure that they take charge of themselves within society and in collaboration with it, not on the fringe. The challenge facing the Commission will be to take into account this necessity in its recommendations.

The Commission must examine an option which confirms that Québec has the freedom to choose, that the primordial interests of Quebecers are reflected through a choice which stresses economic and political stability. It is through this method that Native peoples, too, can share in a spirit of partnership with other Quebecers the hope for a stable, sound, economically healthy future. This objective is essential to enable Native peoples to maintain their identity and specificity by giving them the means to develop an economy which places them on an equal footing in Québec society. In this way, they will be able to ensure their future in a strong Québec.

With regard to the participation of Native peoples in the deliberations of the Commission, I would like to officially ask members of the Commission, and in particular the steering committee, to envisage a specific forum which will enable Native peoples to express their viewpoints concerning Québec's constitutional future and the place they will occupy as a result.

I also promise to pursue this reflection on the participation of Native peoples by making sure that all of the Native nations are consulted on any proposal concerning Québec's future. It is very important that Native peoples participate in the Commission's deliberations, because their future and their place in Québec society are at stake. It is important that Native peoples seize this opportunity to explain to other Quebecers their viewpoint on their relationship with Québec, from the standpoint of a proposal on

Québec's constitutional future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Siros. I now give the floor to Mr. Guy Chevette.

**Mr. Guy Chevette**

**Mr. Chevette:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to extend best wishes to both chairmen in carrying out this very important, historic mandate in terms of the future of all Quebecers. I would also like to ensure them of my fullest collaboration. You will also allow me to thank Mr. Parizeau, who offered me this opportunity to participate in the work of the Commission by appointing me a member of the Commission and a member of its steering committee.

The Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, which begins its sittings today, results from the unprecedented spirit of solidarity which has swept Québec since the demise of the Meech Lake Accord.

From Mr. Claude Béland's "The harm is already done", to Mr. Bourassa's remarks last June 22 in the National Assembly: "Canada with 11 partners is finished" and "Québec is free and capable of assuming its destiny", and the Leader of the Opposition's "My prime minister" at that time, we have come full circle. During celebrations marking our national holiday, hundreds of thousands of Quebecers put a challenge to their politicians: Were we capable of rising to the challenge and satisfying the expectations of an entire people, by finding the appropriate formula to assume our destiny? We have had to compromise along the way, but what is important is that the government and the Official Opposition have agreed on the essentials, which I will evoke by quoting part of the solemn preamble of Bill 90 establishing the Commission, adopted unanimously by the National Assembly. Here are the three paragraphs:

"Whereas Quebecers are free to assume their own destiny, to determine their political status and to assure their economic, social and cultural development;

Whereas Quebecers wish to play an active part in defining the political and constitutional future of Québec;

[...] it is necessary to redefine the political and constitutional status of Québec".

The Commission is an original means we have adopted to act upon the desire of Quebecers. I believe that politicians have met the challenge put to them. I would like to simply express the wish that, during the coming months, this challenge will be met every day by all members of the Commission and that we will avoid partisanship.

Québec and Quebecers expect us to meet

this challenge. In terms of the fulfilment of our mandate as such, I would like to share with you a number of reflections from my fellow Quebecers which clearly indicate their expectations. Some have favoured sovereignty for 25 or 30 years; others are among those who believed in 1980 that "no" meant "yes" and who also understand that English Canada's rejection of the bare minimum that the Meech Lake Accord represented now leaves them no alternative but to seek a solution entirely of their own devising.

Most of these ordinary individuals I meet hope that the Commission will make clear proposals, put forward solutions designed to halt federal-provincial sparring and over-subtle negotiations which have been dragging on for decades and decades.

No-one wishes to relive the mayhem of last June surrounding the artificial resuscitation and the final demise of the Meech Lake Accord. Quebecers spontaneously tell us that they wish to develop at their own pace, according to their own aspirations and culture, freely and democratically, without having to beg anyone for privileges, or rights they believe are basic, and that they no longer wish to see their destiny or future submitted to a vote of ten against one. Moreover, most of them have also developed the conviction that English Canada can also develop at its own pace and according to its aspirations, without Québec's always being considered the prime hinderer. Nor do they want Canada to prevent them from doing the same.

(12 noon)

For example, although discussing the constitution may often seem abstract and superfluous to most Quebecers, beyond the legal texts, the Canadian Constitution affects our everyday lives, especially during an economic crisis. In the health and social services sector, one with which I am quite familiar, the implications of federalism are all too real. In 1867, when the British North America Act was adopted, the basic text of the constitution stipulated that health and social services, such as they were, fell under Québec's jurisdiction.

After World War II, Ottawa decided to involve itself in matters which did not concern it; to avoid contravening the constitution, it used what is called its power to spend, that is, it taxed Quebecers, collected the money and gave it back to Québec, under certain conditions. The amounts in question were so considerable that Québec had no choice but to comply.

Mr. Marc-Yvan Côté, the current Minister of Health and Social Services, who is preparing a reform of the health care system, has his hands tied by federal legislation respecting guaranteed health services. He could not put forward an original solution elaborated in Québec even if he wanted to. Thus, the federal Parliament adopts legislation affecting a sector which, normally, should fall solely under Québec's jurisdiction.

To this unacceptable constraint is added another, that of the establishment of priorities respecting the use to which are tax dollars are put. The ability to pay taxes is not boundless, even if the people who listen to us are convinced that governments think the opposite. Ottawa and Québec share what is called a tax base. What Ottawa takes from your pockets, Québec does not get. This may all constitute a political debate with few concrete consequences for taxpayers when during boom times, governments spend freely. This is no longer the case.

The federal government is heading for bankruptcy and must trim its spending. Among other things, it has targeted health and social services, and Québec can do nothing about it. The freeze on the federal contribution to health care financing initiated by Mr. Wilson in the last Budget represents a shortfall for Québec of \$157 400 000 in 1990-1991. If we take into account other federal cutbacks adopted since 1982, the shortfall for Québec in 1990-1991 alone in the field of health care totals \$848 000 000 and will reach \$1 121 000 000 in 1991-1992. Obviously, Ottawa's trimming does not reflect the tax base and is forcing Québec, which accords priority to maintaining services, to cut elsewhere.

If a Québec government felt it were better to use this money for volunteer organizations, for example, and chose to cut military spending or the budget allocated to the Governor General or the Canadian Senate, it could not do so. Québec does not exercise complete control over the money collected from Québec taxpayers. It is at Ottawa's mercy. This, it will be remembered, is what upset Mr. Côté's faith in federalism, and rightly so.

What can be done? Should we demand that health and social services fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of Québec? This may well be the question a number of people are asking themselves. It should be remembered that in 1920, Alexandre Taschereau denounced Ottawa's meddling in the social sector. In 1946, Maurice Duplessis criticized unwarranted federal interference in the field of health insurance, as did Jean Lesage in 1965, Daniel Johnson in 1967, Jean-Jacques Bertrand in 1969, Prime Minister Bourassa in 1970, and René Lévesque in 1978. Is the same thing going to happen in 1991? It would seem that, if Ottawa has not understood on seven previous occasions, how will it understand on the eighth?

It is for this reason that thoughtful, mature individuals do not hesitate to tell us that one of the great dangers facing the Commission is seeking artificial compromises, neither fish nor fowl, or drawing up a long shopping list. This will only help perpetuate a climate of confrontation which is as pernicious for English Canada as it is for Québec and would replicate the absurd negotiations we went through in June, and to which I alluded earlier. To those who, in

good faith, still believe in a last chance, let us simply remember that we were refused an interpretive clause which, in the view of a number of people, was quite meaningless.

My fellow Quebecers also tell me, without ambiguity - and I share their viewpoint - that this Commission must not take into account the possible acceptance or refusal of English Canada in seeking solutions. It is not incumbent upon Québec to define what a future Canada might be, but to define what Québec wants to become. I strongly deplore a return to the days of scarecrows, the spectre of which the prime minister of Canada evoked on the weekend when he made his remarks about the solvency of pension funds.

The clarity of different options imposes itself more than ever. As my colleague Mr. Brassard, MNA for Lac-Saint-Jean, rightly noted earlier, it is also essential to always bear in mind that, because of the legal framework imposed on us by the 1981 Canadian Constitution, any attempt to reform federalism, especially by transferring fields of jurisdiction, is subject to the yoke of the amending formula, federal Parliament, 750.

We do not have the right to delude our fellow Quebecers and I am convinced that respect for the latter demands that we clearly display our colours. As for myself, I am firmly convinced that Québec is entirely capable of becoming a sovereign nation. We have the skills, the manpower, the natural resources, a marvellous culture and, above all, we are capable. The day when we have the courage to collectively take responsibility for ourselves and exercise our legitimate right to self-determination, we will, like some other peoples, be capable of offering our neighbours and other countries the possibility of associating with us economically through mutually advantageous treaties.

I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to reiterate the remarks of Professor Gil Rémillard who, in volume 1 of his two books devoted to Canadian federalism wrote on page 88 that "Federalism is at once a union of States and of persons which must be based above all on an unshakable desire to live together. This is probably the first condition for the existence of any federation." This desire, in my view, no longer exists. It certainly no longer exists in Québec. I would express the wish that this Commission reflect the population of Québec, over 60 percent of which now wishes to assume responsibility for itself. I also hope that all of the members will have the courage of their deepest convictions. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You are fortunate, Mr. Chevrete. If the Chair had been able to count you would have exceeded your ten minutes by a few seconds. Ha, ha, ha!

To quote Mr. Rémillard, but we are not asking everyone to do the same thing. Mr. Claude Béland.

#### Mr. Claude Béland

**Mr. Béland (Claude):** Thank you Mr. Chairman. You know that I was called to this table as representative of Québec's cooperative sector. In short, I was invited to come, with you, MNAs and representatives of the various sectors, to determine the extent and the depth of the consensus that together we could arrive at as to Québec's future, perhaps because of my cooperative experience. But it seems to me that a prerequisite for establishing a consensus is recognizing the good faith of all those who are part of this Commission. I do not have the pleasure of knowing each of you personally, but I feel that everyone together - and I take this as read - that we all have the same goal: to safeguard and improve the quality of life of every Quebecer. I feel certain that this first assumption has already been established.

But on the other hand, and you must know this, the human being, in all his complexity, in the end finds his true quality of life in the satisfaction of deep aspirations. I think we must admit, at the outset, that the human being is not only an economic creature, not only a worker, an entrepreneur or a consumer. He is also a person, a unique being, with emotions, plans, feelings, dreams, and that he aspires to the realization of his full potential. As he is at the same time a social being and, by his nature, inclined to live in relationship with others, he finds nourishment and often happiness in history, in his values, in his sensibilities and in the hopes he shares in a special way with those of the same origin, in a continuity that stretches from the past to the future, and in a powerful feeling of belonging to a human community that has meaning for him and that he wants to ensure will endure.

In this sense, I think our responsibility as members of the Commission is very great because, if we are to contribute to the quality of life of our people, we must consider what they are in a comprehensive sense. It will not be a question of merely lining up and comparing figures, but one of finding in choices for the future an answer to both their personal needs and their common aspirations.

Some have already affirmed that this Commission is an historic one, citing both the original nature of its composition and the importance of the mandate entrusted to it. This is true. But I believe that this Commission will be an historic one if it truly feels its role to be the taking of a new step in the long road that, from the time of the Conquest, Francophones have chosen to follow so that they will cease to live as a minority in their own country. If this

Commission succeeds in helping them advance along that road, I am certain that the people of Québec will find in that a degree of security, and in security one always finds a better quality of life.

For in my opinion, this is where we stand. This Commission is not here to remake history, but to record it. We cannot forget over 200 years of continuous attempts to achieve true national autonomy. We cannot ignore decades of subtle but tenacious struggle, and of the struggle for emancipation we fought with such determination that 25 years ago - it really was 25 years ago - a Prime Minister of Québec, the Honourable Jean Lesage, was able to affirm, without fear of reprisals, and I quote: "Québec must be the political expression of French Canada and play the role of mother country to those who speak French in Canada". He added: "Québec has its own characteristics which it is entitled to develop and safeguard. To achieve this it must have, to the greatest extent possible, the economic, social, administrative and political levers through which it can realize the legitimate aspirations of a mature people".

At that time, he vowed that any action Québec took would be taken in a spirit of peace and harmony, in keeping with the North American reality and, in particular, the reality of Canadian federalism. We must remember above all that all governments since that date have been inspired by the same objectives, expressed successively by slogans or a variety of ideas such as "masters in our own house", "equality or independence", "cultural sovereignty", "sovereignty-association", and "let us assure our future". Quebecers have always wanted the same thing, to give Québec the autonomy it needs to build its own future, one consistent with the legitimate aspirations of a mature people.

Ten years ago it was even suggested to the people of Québec that they speed up this process by affirming our rights. With the information they had at the time, Quebecers chose to resume negotiations. And we are all aware that negotiation has failed. The present Prime Minister of Québec, the Honourable Robert Bourassa, said last June - we all remember it well for we were glued to our television sets - "Whatever is said and whatever is done, Québec is today and for always a distinct society, free and capable of determining its own destiny and its own development."  
(12:15 p.m.)

Just because the negotiations failed the people of Québec are not about to give up their struggle for greater autonomy. On the contrary, they now want to accentuate it and to specify without delay what they must now do as a people to assure the continuity of history, the continuity of their history. But given the existing impasse, we are all aware that there are not many new avenues. There is no need, it

seems to me, to engage in long debates in order to make a list of the possibilities. What is more important is that this Commission assess the consequences, the conditions and the risks, for all the people of Québec, of the options we have. The role of this Commission in my opinion is less to break the deadlock for Quebecers will do that — it is always the people who make a country, not only the politicians and even less the businesspeople, I realize that — but to do as much work as it can, to bring together as much information as possible in order to get the answers to questions that our people put about choices and the consequences of the choices they will have to make.

This Commission will therefore have to be very open, transparent. It must be a place for exchange in which rigour takes precedence over partisanship. We must quench the thirst of our compatriots for information so that they will be able to make a democratic choice with full knowledge of the facts, accepting consciously and voluntarily the risks inherent in that choice. For we must labour under no illusions; any change, of whatever kind, particularly if it is to be made unilaterally, involves risks and upheavals. I believe it is on these questions that the Commission must concentrate with the greatest integrity.

We do not have to decide whether or not Québec is a nation. We have known it is for a long time. When I was rereading past records in preparation for this Commission, I was surprised to discover that a British emissary to Québec who dreamed of the assimilation of the French had himself discovered, and said in writing to his Queen, in 1839 — and that is not yesterday — "I expected to find a conflict between the government and the people; instead I found two nations in strife within a single State". Québec is incontestably a nation, and, as Ernest Renan said in the time of Lord Durham: "A nation is a grand solidarity constituted by a knowledge of the sacrifices one has made and by those one is prepared to make".

I would like to see this Commission act as the forum par excellence for the expression of the enormous solidarity felt by the nation of Québec, not only by its Francophone members but by its other cultural components. It is to this that I intend to devote my efforts, Mr. Chairman, throughout the work of this Commission. I want to throw as much light as possible on the issues involved in the continuity of our nation as well as on the challenges that we shall have to face together, to assure its safekeeping and its development. I feel myself honoured, indeed privileged to be able to contribute to the work of this Commission. I sincerely thank all those who have made this possible. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

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

you Mr. Bélanger. Mr. Guy Bélanger now has the floor.

### **Mr. Guy Bélanger**

**Mr. Bélanger (Guy):** Mr. Chairman, since the "masters in our own house" message of Jean Lesage, 30 years ago, which several people have quoted here this morning, Quebecers have repeatedly had to take a position on the question of what they wanted, how they wanted it and why they wanted it, with regard to their identity as a distinct society and their membership in the Canadian federation.

We have become aware as a people of the difficulties that the present constitutional framework governing Canada presents for us. We have only to think of the problems with communications and immigration, and those we have come up against in protecting our language, the French language, as well as of the sectors where our powers are too restricted, given our aspirations.

Our legitimate, minimal demands, formulated in the Meech Lake Accord, were rejected by a system that does not allow for evolution. This is the lesson we were forced to draw from the failure of Meech Lake. The present system for making constitutional amendments is ineffective and, in my opinion, no longer a viable path for the future. Our government, fresh from this setback, has set up a non-partisan commission. I stress "non-partisan" because it seems to me that there is a tendency to forget this.

We have a non-partisan commission with a specific mandate to define a blueprint for Québec, a vision of our collective future both politically and constitutionally, a blueprint that will have to be lucid, realistic, reassuring and in line with our expectations, economically and as a people. Ours must be a vision which gives preference to the stable over the unstable, the constant over the variable, the rational over the emotional, and therefore a clear, coherent vision. Basically we want to know not only where we are going but how we are going to get there. This is perhaps what we most of all expect from this Commission. A blueprint that will put an end to sterile discussion that is often humiliating for Québec. Think of the unilateral patriation of the Constitution, think of the failure of Meech Lake. My feeling is that there must never be another Meech Lake for Québec. Never again. The blueprint that will result in the organizing and ordering of our society must be based on the values that have made us a distinct society. These are the values of democracy, of justice, of attachment to our culture, our traditions and our language, which will constitute the foundations of our project.

It will therefore be important for us, as members of the Commission, to show a great openness of spirit, an absence of prejudice which

would render our reflections sterile. We must pay close attention to those who testify before the Commission, to their vision of the future, their hopes and their expectations. Some will present their views in flamboyant fashion, others in a manner more modest, less at ease, but all are equally important. I feel that they should all be equal in the eyes of the Commission, for it must be remembered that it is up to the people to determine their own destiny and not to the politicians.

It will be necessary for the Commission to look resolutely ahead, accepting from the beginning that, with the exception of the status quo and annexation to the United States, for example, anything is possible and that, between these two extremes, there is a place in which Québec could find itself at home.

I know that when the moment comes Quebecers will have the courage of their convictions, for they will know what conditions are necessary for a democratic structure that is politically well organized and the sacrifices that will be demanded. But this road will be no bed of roses; it will not be easy I think. A comparison will help you grasp what we are headed for. Driving a car without discomfort on a road depends on two things: the surface must be smooth and the suspension of the car must be of good quality. I believe - and I would say that this is just as true elsewhere - there is no road of sufficiently high quality to abandon good suspension of a car. The worse the condition of the road the better the suspension will have to be. Therefore, the more difficult things are the more open and flexible we will have to be.

The prospects for a smooth passage are not very probable. We have only to recall the Referendum, which even divided families. And who knows what the reaction will be in the other Canadian provinces? They are not going to allow us to go or decide things without reacting, without doing something. Whether we like it or not the Commission will have to take this into consideration. We must be alert and careful, especially when we take a position to avoid creating more chaos than change, for whatever we propose, there will be resistance to the change. This is one of the main challenges we will have to face, for the work of the Commission is going to reawaken a passion for constitutional debate that the events of the past few months have perhaps muted.

Already some voices have been heard brandishing the old spectres of cuts in pensions and other disasters which could assail us - low-level tactics that must be rejected but which nevertheless remind us of what is happening. Any change, of whatever kind, arouses feelings of insecurity. The more people continue to do this - and some will - the more effort must be made to be clear and coherent so as to properly inform and calm those who feel insecure and to

maintain a serene atmosphere in the face of the eventual changes.

I shall close with a reference to the words of Mr. Léon Dion, who said, very appropriately, that a society which is incapable of settling its own crises will sooner or later fall into disorder. The time has come to act. Quebecers have so far been models of calm and serenity in their expectations. But these expectations remain just that in their entirety. This Commission has a mandate to come up with some answers, to throw light on some of their questioning as a people for, as I have said, it is up to the people and not the politicians to determine their destiny.

The time for wars of words and for partisanship has passed. Effective, coherent action is my wish now. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you Mr. Bélanger. The time has now come for the class photo. I ask all the members of the Commission to remain in their seats; certain members who have had to leave will return. We ask those who are not members - and we are very pleased to have them among us - to leave so that the photo can be taken without hindrance and to return this afternoon at 3:30 p.m. This sitting is now terminated. We shall resume at 3:30 p.m. Thank you.

(Adjournment of hearing at 12:26 p.m.)

(Resumption at 3:33 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Gentlemen, we shall now resume this inaugural hearing and continue our tour of the table. Mr. Claude Dauphin now has the floor.

#### **Mr. Claude Dauphin**

**Mr. Dauphin:** Thank you very much Mr. Chairman, Mr. Co-Chairman, Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen. As has been mentioned several times, the hearings on the future of Québec constitute a rendezvous with history in the collective life of Quebecers. I can assure you that I am undertaking this work with a great openness of spirit, convinced that this exercise will be a turning point in our democratic life. Mr. Chairman, it was on this very spot, in this Red Room, that in 1981 I was sworn in for the first time as Member of the National Assembly. My Leader at the time gave me the responsibility for youth affairs. I want to say to you that the youth of Québec constitute our future, and to ask all the Commissioners sitting on this enlarged Commission, this constitutional Commission, to constantly keep in mind the future of our youth, because it is they who are going to live longest with our recommendations and, of course, with the resulting decisions.

Also, Mr. Chairman, I was subsequently



entrusted, still as part of the Official Opposition, with responsibility for the cultural communities. In this respect, in the light of my experience as Member of the Assembly in the 1980s, I can assure you that the cultural communities represent an extraordinary contribution to Québec society and that Quebecers must give evidence of an openness of spirit in their dealings with these communities.

I also want to stress at once that, as Commissioners, we should, in our recommendations, make sure that, politically and constitutionally, we have all the means, all the levers we need to ensure the integration of the communities we call cultural into the Francophone majority. We must therefore have those tools. Also, in the matter of immigration, for me it is a question of survival, ensuring the effective integration of the cultural communities into our society.

Mr. Chairman, the future of Québec does not belong to any particular individual or to any political party whatever, but must be the fruit of the collective will of Quebecers to consciously choose a path that is their own. Freedom of expression as reflected through our institutions is, in the eyes of all citizens, a precious asset that we must cherish and enrich. The Québec parliamentary system is the guarantee of this freedom. This enlarged Commission has provided individuals and groups with the opportunity to present, without restriction, their conception of the place that Québec must from now on occupy in North America.

This Parliamentary Commission provides a special platform for those from whatever region who wish to express the views and aspirations they feel are most likely to improve the quality of Québec's democratic, economic, cultural and social life. During these hearings, there will be no lack of reference to Québec's historic achievements. However, the recent failure of the Meech Lake Accord is forcing us to study the future of Québec from a new angle. It is my hope that we shall arrive at the broadest consensus possible.

Mr. Chairman, the Prime Minister of Québec has frequently said, as he did after the failure of Meech Lake, that Québec is capable of taking charge of its own destiny. Last June 23, Mr. Bourassa had this to say: "Whatever one says and whatever one thinks, Québec is today and forever a distinct society, free and capable of assuming responsibility for its own destiny and development". We undertake our work today armed with faith in the means at our disposal. During the coming weeks we shall have occasion to hear many points of view.

If the number of briefs received by the Commission is anything to go by, many groups have opted to become involved in the debate. I rejoice at this. The failure of the Accord last June was an event with enormous implications

for the future of this country. It is with full knowledge of the gravity of the situation that we are today consulting the people about our common future. The debate is open to all and must remain so. In a democratic society such as ours, all have a voice. We must listen to them with the respect and openness due them.

Mr. Chairman, Québec is a democratic society, open to the world, one that respects basic freedoms. Throughout our history, Québec has lived in peace, except for brief periods. Each time strife arose we tried to reestablish a peaceful climate as quickly as possible. Modern Québec underwent a major crisis in 1970; and there was another recently. I am, of course, referring to the events of last summer concerning the aboriginals. I can personally say that this was indeed a difficult summer for Quebecers, for a certain bridge is partly located in my riding. I want to mention two things about these events. First, Québec got through this crisis without suspending any fundamental rights. During this period, the freedoms of expression and assembly were at no time infringed. No one asked reporters to cease their activities because there was a crisis. No, we saw to it that the basic rights were respected in their entirety. Second, from beginning to end Québec gave priority to the lives of Quebecers. After the sad event of July 11, when Corporal Lemay of the Sûreté du Québec lost his life, we felt it imperative to avoid further loss of life. Several hundred people spent a very hard summer. The conflict was long because of the many disagreements of all kinds among the people most directly affected. The cost to society was high, but the worst was avoided.

A test of this kind shows the strengths of a society. The aboriginal crisis was an unhappy experience in many respects, but very revealing as to the importance accorded democratic values. It is in such a situation that the terms "charter of rights", "respect", "understanding", "peace", "force of character" and "sharing" assume their full meaning.

The aboriginals form an important segment of Québec society. The Québec of tomorrow will not be built without them. They have often been intimately involved in the social, political, cultural and economic history of Québec. I read with a great deal of interest the address given on October 18 by my neighbour Mr. Sirros, Minister for Native Affairs, who occupies this office full time, which is important. For those interested, the Minister was speaking on the occasion of an intervention on a motion of censure or, if you prefer, a motion of censure by the Opposition.

I was particularly happy to learn that, since 1986, some 50 agreements involving about a dozen government departments were concluded with aboriginal communities. For example, in the area of community development, in September

1989, the government concluded an agreement with the Cree that provided for the creation of a village close to Chibougamau. Over \$ 30 000 000 will be devoted to this major project.

I also learned, Mr. Chairman, that the government had actively participated in the creation of a data bank on the Montagnais work force. I can only rejoice at this type of initiative. In his address, Minister Sirros informed us that 50 % of the Cree population were under 18 years of age. Mr. Chairman, I am unable to remain indifferent in the face of such a figure. At a time when a falling birthrate is hitting all of society, it is comforting to find that there are some exceptions and that new generations are assured.

As a member of this Commission, I fervently hope that we will hold a forum on the aboriginal communities in January or February. The economic, social and cultural development of Québec will of necessity take into account that of the aboriginal communities, for their contribution to Québec life is there to be seen.

It is imperative to ensure the maintenance of sound relations founded on mutual respect and understanding. I sincerely hope that during the hearings everyone will keep in mind that, no matter what the language, origin, race or colour, all citizens have a role to play in the political and constitutional future of Québec. It is our responsibility to listen to them in order to shed the greatest possible light on their legitimate aspirations. Thank you for your attention.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you Mr. Dauphin. I was about to say to you what I said to Mr. Chevette, that the chair does not know how to count, but you did after all stop at exactly the right time. Mrs. Pelchat.

**Mrs. Christiane Pelchat**

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. It is now my turn to express the pride I feel in being part of this Parliamentary Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. Mr. Chairman, I too wish to assure you of my collaboration and generosity, as you asked this morning.

The first objective of this Commission is to find, on behalf of all Quebecers, a framework that will ensure Québec its proper place in North America. It is for this reason that the Commission will give pride of place to the views of Quebecers who wish to tell us how they perceive Québec for the years to come. It is also the reason for paying attention to citizens who are somewhat more passionate about certain questions, experts who will share their views of what our society should be and in what kind of framework it should evolve. It is the reason finally for the Commission's allowing the

organization of forums on specific questions, for example the question of the place of aboriginals in our society, or the participation of the young generation in the preparation of the changes that are to be made. Forums of this kind will certainly enlighten the Commission and clarify perspectives that otherwise would remain vague for lack of time to discuss them.

For me, this Commission is primarily an exercise in freedom of expression, which characterizes democratic societies. The chance for us to take part in this Commission is also, of course, a measure of such a society. Furthermore, to find gathered around this table so many representatives of different schools of thought is indicative of the non-partisan nature of the exercise, not only for the members from political parties but for those who represent very specific corporate interests.

I feel that the most important quality of which we must give evidence is openness of spirit. We must put aside our prejudices, favourable and unfavourable, with regard to this or that ideology. As our Prime Minister said this morning, we must not come to any conclusions before we have listened.  
(3:45 p.m.)

Mr. Chairman, Meech is dead. We must now look towards the future. We have just turned a 30-year page of history in which all the First Ministers of Québec have tried to explain and have accepted the distinct nature of Québec society. When we look to the future, we can hope and we can dream. For my part, Mr. Chairman, I see a modern, dynamic Francophone society, convinced of the need for sustainable development. But above all, whatever the political and constitutional system, I see a society which, as a first definition, is a free and democratic society, in which the basic rights and freedoms are respected. I find it reassuring, Mr. Chairman, that this desire has been included in the premises, in the considerations of the legislation creating this Commission. It is too facile to take for granted that our society will always enjoy the basic freedoms to which we freely subscribe. It is too much of a risk not to be on one's guard, allowing our ideology to artfully overrule these fundamental principles underlying our free and democratic society. One has only to consider, Mr. Chairman, freedom of association, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, the right to information, freedom of conscience and of religion, freedom of mobility, or legal rights, economic rights and equality rights such as the right to be free of discrimination on the grounds of race, colour or sex. For me these are basic values to which we have always adhered. They constitute the basic premises for any change in a constitutional framework or political system. I am convinced that in these values lies our common interest. They cannot be put aside in

order to ensure Québec's interests, which, in any case, lie in maintaining a free, democratic society. This Commission, I am sure, will take into consideration this fundamental reality and ensure that its recommendations will be built on it.

Mr. Chairman, we have a unique and unprecedented opportunity to lay the foundations of a new society. It is our duty to involve the people closely in the debate under way, and above all to consult them and obtain their endorsement for the changes proposed. Today all Quebecers must feel themselves challenged, take time for reflection and play their part in our discussions. The young people, and the men and women of Québec have the obligation to make themselves heard, and ours is the obligation to listen. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you Mrs. Pelchat. We have come to the end of the addresses from members of the steering committee. We shall now call upon speakers in strictly alphabetical order. Mr. Marcel Beaudry, you now have the floor.

**Mr. Marcel Beaudry**

**Mr. Beaudry:** Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, allow me first of all to express the pride I feel in being asked to take part in the work of this Commission, and the privilege conferred on me to be permitted to work with people who, over the years, have contributed so much to Québec in their various fields.

It is therefore with humility and enthusiasm that I join this group, and the firm intention of making a positive, objective contribution to the hearings and to future deliberations. The recommendations of this unique and historic Commission will doubtless have consequences that are not only of a serious and decisive nature but will put certain constraints on Québec's political and constitutional future. Nationalist feeling has increased considerably in Québec over the past few months and there can be no doubt that federalism, in its present form, is unacceptable to Quebecers as a whole. This does not mean, however, that all are necessarily in favour of radical and definitive separation from the rest of Canada.

The bonds, rights and obligations that unite us with the other provinces are, for many Quebecers, still not negotiable, except to the extent that greater autonomy can be attained for our respective ideologies. It is in this context that the Commission will have to work. It will be obliged to find a formula under which the economic gains of the past few years can be maintained and increased by allowing the complete fulfilment of all the legitimate ambitions of Quebecers.

Many proposals have been put forward: the

redrawing of the political map of Canada, creating five regions, a delegation with increased powers, sovereignty-association of some kind, Canadian renewal on the model of the European Community, and a unilateral declaration of independence following an election or a referendum. All of these proposals are to be found in the briefs that will be submitted to you and no doubt other proposals will be made. It goes without saying that they have a certain interest and merit special attention. For some of them further study is obviously in order.

In view of these differences, the work of the Commission will have to be imbued with an objective and open spirit, and care must be taken to assess the potential effects of the recommendations, not only for Quebecers as a community but also for the regions. Of all Québec regions, Outaouais is the most vulnerable to any constitutional change. Allow me to dwell for a moment on this particular problem and leave to other representatives of the business world the task of dealing with economic and other major issues for Québec.

Outaouais is made up of the regional county municipalities of the vallée de la Gatineau, Papineau, Pontiac, and the existing Communauté régionale de l'Outaouais. We should remember that this region is an integral part of Québec and that its residents are proud to be Quebecers. And it is a region that intends to remain part of Québec. However, because of its geographical situation on the border with Ontario, next door to the national capital, Outaouais, it must be acknowledged, unlike the other regions of Québec, has never received from any of the successive Québec governments its fair share in many areas. It is still today greatly dependent on the neighbouring province for services in the fields of health, higher education, culture, technology, commerce, air transport and road transport, to name only a few.

In tourism and recreation, the largest facilities in the region as well as the ones with the greatest potential are under the control of the National Capital Commission. And it is important to consider that this Commission and the federal government own immovables on the Québec side of the border worth \$1 000 000. One can imagine the "in lieu" of taxes that this amount represents for our municipalities. What would the financial constraints be in the event of a loss of this revenue and what would become of these properties? But the most important major characteristic of this region is an economy that is centred on the public administration. In effect, 26 000 residents of a total 103 000 employees are in the federal public service, 18 000 of whom work in Ottawa. In addition, 15 000 others are employed in private enterprise in Ontario. This means that 41 000 or 40 % of the labour force could be directly affected by any change in the constitutional system.

These are only a few of the practical problems facing Outaouais residents, who have devoted their lives to and invested their future in this region on the faith of the existing Constitution. It can be readily seen that any constitutional change could have serious, even catastrophic consequences for the region, depending on whether or not the change resulted in extensive decentralization of the federal public service, and whether or not Québec's choice for tomorrow were moderate or radical.

A number of regional organizations are preparing briefs that express with force and in detail the fears of a population, most of which feels itself taken hostage by the conflicts and difficulties of governments, the advantages it now has because of the job security it enjoys by reason of its geographical situation, and the remoteness of the provincial capital which, as I said earlier, is not very attentive to its needs. These organizations intend to propose solutions that will minimize the foreseeable impact that any change in the political structure could have.

It will therefore not be sufficient for the Commission, in its recommendations, to express pious wishes, make a brief statement about this region or suggest the formation of a study group to analyse once again the negative consequences of such change. Rather it will have to propose practical solutions and appropriate mechanisms to compensate for the negative results of any change.

To this end, it would be preferable if the main recommendations of these organizations for corrective measures were accepted, since they have for many years witnessed the difficulties and problems that are the daily experience of the residents of Outaouais.

This being said, I am of the opinion that, while seeking a consensus, the Commission, in its procedures and recommendations, must always give top priority to the economic security of all Quebecers. It will have to make sure that this security, what we have achieved, will never be sacrificed or jeopardized. This is the essence of the Commission's mandate. All other considerations, however important, will have to take second place.

This is the spirit in which I would like to see the Commission begin its work, one which I would hope would lead to practical and effective recommendations for permanent political and constitutional solutions for Québec.

In conclusion, I call upon God to light the way for the Commission in its work.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you Mr. Beaudry. Mrs. Louise Bégin.

**Mrs. Louise Bégin**

**Mrs. Bégin:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Members of the Commission, ladies and gentlemen. Today begins the work of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. Its mandate is to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of our province, and to formulate, between now and next March 28, recommendations to the National Assembly. This Commission, set up after the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, is empowered to carry out any study or consultation it deems necessary to its mandate. Among other things, it will be able to consult experts, and hold public hearings and open discussions. Québec is now in a position to carry to their conclusions its reflections on its political and constitutional future. The Liberal Party is prepared to examine any constitutional formula that will ensure Quebecers economic and political stability.

We shall pay careful attention to any proposal that meets these conditions. All other sectors of activity will, of course, be examined, the Commission gives assurances of that. Of the 36 members appointed, 13 come from business, union, cooperative, educational and cultural circles, and two others represent the municipalities. Therefore, for us in the Québec Liberal Party, the economy must be the focus of our preoccupations insofar as the constitutional future is concerned. We believe we have helped to give back to Quebecers a certain confidence in their economy. As evidence, we now have an annual performance that includes the creation of 50 000 jobs. In 1990, 31 % of the new jobs in Canada were in Québec. We also believe that we have improved the management of public finances, by reducing a \$ 3 500 000 000 deficit in 1985 to one of \$1 750 000 000 today, a drop of 50 %.

(4 p.m.)  
It is equally interesting and significant that, for the same period, the discrepancy between the tax burden of Quebecers and of people in Ontario has dropped by 6.6 %. For corporations the decrease has been 20 %. The economic stability we have sought has created conditions that are favourable to economic development through the stimulation of investment. Such major projects as Alouette and Lavalco are an illustration of the tangible results of this economic policy. These instances of the recent performance of the Québec economy show that Québec's constitutional choice must be one without risk to our economic achievements.

In any case, we shall always have need of policies in order to capitalize our businesses adequately, allowing them in this way to adapt to a constantly evolving world economy.

Also, the Québec of the future must pay special attention to the regions. We have already shown our concern in this respect by publishing our action plan, the main objective of which is to ensure that specifically regional policies are

formulated. It is therefore essential to preserve and consolidate our precious gains so that Quebecers, especially the young, will not be victims of an economically weak Québec. I assure you that our work within the Commission will be guided by our concern to find a solution that will rally all Quebecers to the greater cause.

I am aware that the choices that will be made and the decisions that will be taken during the Commission's work will have important repercussions on our society. At this point, I want to assure all women that the Liberal Party will pay close attention to the expectations of the Québec family. We shall have to analyse the division of jurisdictions, the spending powers of the federal authorities, protection of constitutional rights and freedoms and the establishment of new political institutions. We have therefore to constantly keep in mind that our constitutional choice must be such as to enable us to respond as effectively as possible to the problem of poverty, which is most severe among women, young people and single-parent families.

I would like to emphasize in closing that the exercise we are engaged in must take place in a tranquil, positive atmosphere. I am confident that all the members of this Commission will do their utmost to make our work constructive and enlightening for the future of Québec. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you Mrs. Bégin.

**Mr. Chevette:** Mr. Chairman, I believe Mrs. Blackburn has a favour to ask of you.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to let Mrs. Pagé take my turn, after the next speaker, since she has to leave at 4:30 because of an emergency.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You are not even asking a favour for yourself, Mrs. Blackburn. Your request cannot be refused. We will therefore hear Mrs. Pagé.

**Mrs. Lorraine Pagé**

**Mrs. Pagé:** Mr. Chairman, allow me to begin by thanking Mrs. Blackburn very kindly for permitting me to take her turn because I must urgently return to Montréal.

Messrs. Chairmen, dear colleagues, at the start of the hearings of this Commission, whose credibility many people are questioning even before its work begins, some light should be shed on the Commission's importance and its limitations, but also on the expectations that it is reasonable to have in its regard. I would like to call attention once again to the fact that there are no representatives of the aboriginal

peoples, the feminist movement or the cultural communities, because their absence is significant. There are, of course, women and people from the cultural communities on the Commission, as we have been reminded. But it should be pointed out that they are not sitting as representatives of women or of the cultural communities. It was decided to create a broader parliamentary commission, i.e. to add to the members of the National Assembly, who, in principle, represent the entire population of Québec, representatives of the main sectors of our society. The people chosen represent the sectors to which, it was decided, the most importance would be given. This is the very meaning of a broader Commission, and this makes certain absences even more glaring.

It is not by chance that the CEQ is represented on the Commission, but in recognition of the status of the Centrale and its members in the Québec community. In all societies and all countries, unions, particularly those in the educational sector, have played, with their members, a paramount part in the struggle to achieve the fulfilment of peoples and in debates concerning the creation of states. Education, the school and those who make it what it is have always played a front-line role in shaping history. And this is indeed what is happening here. Québec is now at a crossroads, and this Commission, despite its limitations, constitutes a crucial step in our development.

I mention the Commission's limitations because it is obvious that the Commission does not have a mandate to prepare the future constitution of Québec or to define alone the future society in which we will live. It must, however, cut the Gordian knot to remove the preliminary obstacle to the fulfilment of an evolving Québec. From this standpoint, the Commission must be a forum for the views of all the representative organizations of the Québec people, must succeed in channelling their legitimate aspirations in a proposal that abides by them without diluting them, negotiating, bargaining or selling them short, and must result in the National Assembly's initiating the political process by which Québec's demands are met. Not only the 36 members here today, the the National Assembly and political parties will take this approach, for it must be a popular one taken by a broader Commission open to all Quebecers.

Today, after more than 100 years of debate, exchanges, interminable discussions, unfulfilled dreams and disillusionment, no one doubts that Canadian federalism is absolutely incapable of responding to the legitimate aspirations of the Québec people. This system has no future. It penalizes Québec and has virtually no support left among the Québec people. From promise to promise, from last chance to last chance, we have lost a quarter century without succeeding

in making any change whatsoever.

And when, eight years ago, this fossilized, outmoded, archaic political system managed to make a change, it was for the worse. Rather than beginning to satisfy Québec's demands, it excluded Québec from the Canadian Constitution.

Everything considered, this was a fortunate event that laid bare the truth. Things became clearer than they had ever been before. And they became clearer still last June when Québec's five demands, which were below the minimum requirements to guarantee its future, were not met. Today, we, ourselves, must agree upon the powers that Québec will need to ensure its social, cultural, economic and political development. Everyone knows that we also have to come to a number of agreements with the rest of Canada, but it is clear that they cannot be negotiated from the inside. Canadian federalism is not renewable. We must negotiate these agreements after affirming ourselves so that the discussions are carried out between sovereign states. We have tried to renew the system from the inside for over a century, but to no avail. The time has come to draw the obvious conclusions.

We should particularly not delude ourselves into believing that economic terrorism will have a great effect on the debate. Today's Québec has achieved a level of confidence in itself that makes all hopes possible. Despite shortcomings, deficiencies and setbacks at times in social matters, it has affirmed itself from all standpoints. The social progress it has made in the last quarter century is impressive. Our educational system no longer lags behind others in any way and is propelling us toward the 21st century. Our universal, free health system is the envy of the entire world and is cited as an example in the United States. In short, despite its shortcomings, our society is a haven for immigrants, where rights and freedoms are respected.

The status of women has made more progress here than elsewhere, although much remains to be done. Our economic progress is manifest, our cultural vigour remarkable. Despite dramatic deficiencies, subtle racism and serious conflicts, we have established with our First Nations relations somewhat better than those elsewhere in Canada. In a word, we have reached adulthood, thanks to Canada or in spite of it. What counts is that we have done this ourselves and that we are able to determine our own future lucidly, serenely and rapidly, for time is of the essence.

Time is of the essence in building a country that resembles us, with our own values, our own language and institutions that are reflections of us, with a sense of fraternity that unites us above all and with the will to live together. It is of the essence in putting a stop to the endless constitutional bickering so that

we can proceed to substantial matters, and in building a country in which women are finally and truly the equals of men, all share domestic tasks and live in harmony, and all forms of violence are considered unacceptable, a country that takes care of its children, that provides them with day care centres and kindergartens, that sends them to schools where they can realize their potential, that ensures that children in difficulty have the same rights as the most gifted and that makes colleges and universities accessible to all, a country that has only compassion for its ill and elderly, that watches over the most vulnerable and enables them to live in dignity, a country at peace, where the air is pure, the water fit to drink and the rain natural, a country of lakes and rivers where the snow tastes like snow, a country tailored to the aspirations of all its people where each person has the right to work, the right to leisure time and the right to culture, a country where fraternity reigns among whites, blacks, Asians and aboriginals, is heard throughout the land and is expressed in French.

The Constitution, structures and mechanisms are not ends in themselves but merely means to an end; essential means, but means for fulfilment. The Commission must work toward this fulfilment. It must not impede the emancipation of Quebecers, it must not be an obstacle to their fulfilment, it must not seek barriers and obstacles, it must work to favour the course of history, to topple the barriers, to remove the obstacles.

One last comment that is a ray of hope. For the first time in its history, all of Québec is considering its future, what it is and what it wants to become, without asking what others want. After the failure of a dozen or so conferences of last resort for Canada, here we sit on a Commission of first resort for Québec. We must prove ourselves worthy of the rendezvous we have with history. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mrs. Pagé. I answered Mrs. Blackburn a bit too quickly. She asked that Mrs. Pagé take her turn, but she did not necessarily ask that we go on to the letter P...

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I answered too quickly, so let us go back to Mrs. Blackburn.

**Mrs. Jeanne L. Blackburn**

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe, like the great majority of Quebecers and like the great majority of the people in my riding, that the last bell has tolled in the past few months for these endless negotiating rounds,

which, for 123 years, have always brought Québec back to square one. English Canada rendered an unequivocal judgment in regard to the Meech Lake Accord, although, you will recall, the political situation was never more favourable to an agreement. In addition, Québec's demands were so minimal that the First Ministers of Canada and Québec had no alternative to offer for they did not envisage the Accord's defeat. Since June 23, Quebecers have understood that sovereignty is now the only path open to them in pursuing their development, for it alone expresses our own will.

However, the confusion generated and perpetuated regarding the very concept of sovereignty makes it less clear than it actually is. Certain aspects of sovereignty concerning which no compromise is possible must therefore be reiterated. Sovereign peoples, and this is fundamental, adopt all the laws that apply on their territory, collect all their income taxes, negotiate all their international agreements. Then and only then, as sovereign peoples can they voluntarily limit their autonomy by signing agreements with other countries.  
(4:15 p.m.)

Since the cause of federalism has been heard and the notion of sovereignty clarified, I expect this Commission to make suggestions and recommendations on three specific and essential subjects: the nature and scope of feasible and desirable economic associations that a sovereign Québec should negotiate with Canada or any other country; the constitutional guarantees that should be given each citizen, meaning, notably, the rights of aboriginals and allophones; and the political structures on which the powers and responsibilities of this democratic State will be based, structures that will also define the balance of powers between the central government and the regions.

Mr. Chairman, federations are inevitably so centralizing that they become inefficient and ossified. I will develop this point by recalling the particularly pernicious effects of double jurisdiction, especially over education, regional development, and scientific research and technological development, two levers of economic growth that are recognized as such around the world and that are lacking in the present system. Lengthy comment is not required about the negative effects of Québec's inability to establish linguistic school boards, particularly in Montréal. I imagine that the President of the Fédération des commissions scolaires will have much to say on this subject. In regard to regional development, the pernicious effects of federalism are the result of double jurisdiction, centralizing policies, uniform programs that do not consider regional characteristics, that lead to demographic decline, to the aging of the population, to the brain drain, and, for many regions, which are so important to our vast

territory, to poverty pure and simple.

This centralizing approach that generates double jurisdiction inevitably results in the fragmentation of energies and the development of two Québecs in one. Double jurisdiction is fertile ground for passing the buck in establishing priorities. For example, nearly three years after the Québec-Canada agreement was signed, we are still waiting for it to have an effect in my region.

We all agree that technological research and development are major economic levers. Knowledge has replaced capital as the engine of economic growth. We need the instruments of growth that originate, for the most part, in research and development. But for many years, Québec has been systematically overlooked when federal funds for R & D have been handed out, although we have clearly demonstrated our scientific and technological potential. This distortion in the distribution of funds represents a shortfall of some \$ 270 000 000 a year for Québec, which receives less than 20 % of its research contracts from the federal government, whereas Ontario receives more than 53 %. Clearly, our taxes pay for research that is conducted in Ontario and will be of primary benefit to those who live in Ontario. Our economy in general and that of our regions in particular – and this is my main concern – suffer the disastrous effects of this situation. No negotiations are possible in this regard. Sovereignty seems the only solution that will enable Québec to benefit from the funds invested by Quebecers in research and development, which have become economic levers of such paramount importance.

What will be the status of the regions in a sovereign Québec? The situation of Québec's regions that I described previously may have seemed apocalyptic only a few years ago. Today, it is readily agreed that the situation has not worsened unduly. The regions have experienced a demographic and economic decline whose long-term effects on the development of Québec and national identity should not be minimized. The state of the regions is precisely the result of the lack of concern for them over the last few decades. Remember that, having no power over its development, Québec cannot delegate powers it does not have. This, added to the negative effects of federal centralism, provides all the conditions required to empty the regions of their best elements, thereby depriving them of their power over their own development.

I submit that not only do the regions have the resources required to intervene positively in the development of Québec, but that they have the desire and the will to become involved. And what is more, I am fully convinced that the regions are the most important support of Québec's economy and a bulwark of our identity as a people. Québec has roots throughout its

territory. It is dangerous to empty this territory, and we are far from assured that the large urban centres alone can assume responsibility for the continuity of our culture, our values and everything that identifies us. The development of the regions therefore seems to me to be a priority for a sovereign Québec. This is why I hope that the Commission will succeed in defining the structures to be set up to achieve this objective. I also believe that the regions are able to determine the means by which they will ensure their own development, which has led me to claim that the sharing of power is the solution.

Should the existing structure be given additional responsibilities or should new structures be created? Will we find ourselves with a new form of regional government within the RCMs, a regional board with real power over the establishment of priorities or municipalities with new obligations and new means of action? I cannot come to any conclusions in this regard but certain matters must become the responsibility of the regions, notably economic development, health and social services, manpower training and immigration.

With regard to economic development, each region is better able than any other entity to define its development priorities, to identify its research sectors and to establish its collaboration with industry according to the type of firms it has. As regards health and social services, the regions are aware of their problems and the solutions that are right for them. As for manpower training, a careful analysis of needs cannot be carried out in a context of centralization. The regions alone can truly identify their shortcomings and set up mechanisms likely to overcome them.

As regards immigration, the regions should be able to define their needs in order to benefit from this human resource while deconcentrating the large urban centres and contributing effectively to the integration of immigrants. One thing is certain. As it is now carried out, immigration is negative for all the regions. Too often, the immigrant joins the ranks of the poor in a large urban centre and identifies success with an Anglophone minority living in the suburbs.

These, Mr. Chairman, are some of the many questions that must be examined closely by the Commission if we are to give the regions in a sovereign Québec the status that they merit and that is likely to have a positive impact on economic, social and cultural development. The importance of Québec's territory is worth noting. Québec is open space and human and natural resources, as well as identity, language and culture. We must occupy this entire territory and benefit from its wealth to enable our people to take their place in the top ranks of the society of nations.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, for myself and for those in my region who came to this conclusion more than 10 years ago, Québec's and Canada's cause has been heard countless times. Only two courses are open to us: the status quo or sovereignty. I automatically reject the first for it will crush the Québec people to the point of extinction.

I also reject any option requiring the prior agreement of English Canada since the amending formula is an insurmountable obstacle, and I refuse to participate in a solution that offers English Canada another opportunity to humiliate the Québec people.

This having been said, Mr. Chairman, a quarter century in the quagmire of constitutional negotiations is more than enough. I hope that this Commission will adhere to its timetable and swiftly recommend that a public consultation be held.

In conclusion, I want to assure you, Messrs. Chairmen, of my most fervent collaboration. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mrs. Blackburn. Mr. Lucien Bouchard.

**Mr. Lucien Bouchard**

**Mr. Bouchard:** Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, our undertaking has the great merit of being carried out in the heart of the parliamentary institution. Because of this, we will derive an undeniable and indispensable legitimacy, and the sense and the weight of our responsibilities. This is a decisive moment in the progress of the Québec people toward its full political fulfilment.

From the outset, everything depends on Québec's right to self-determination, affirmed by the National Assembly. This is the foundation for recourse, at the appropriate time and in the appropriate place, to the principle of international law in order to free Québec from the shackles imposed on its development by the constitutional amending mechanisms.

Our primary duty is to use all the leeway that the weight of our convictions gives us to achieve the broadest possible consensus in Québec. In other words, we must try to make as much headway as possible together.

Despite our initial differences, I am counting to a great extent on the contributions to be made by the briefs presented and the public debate that will inevitably ensue to fuel the deliberations of the Commission. We cannot work in a vacuum or ignore the intensity of Québec's political will, which I feel now far outstrips official attitudes. Once it appears that, at the least, substantial changes are required and that many people – a very large majority, according to the surveys – believe sovereignty must be achieved, we will face a common



necessity.

Regardless of the constitutional solution that the changes made seem to require, each of us must ask himself what means should be used to achieve it. We all agree that a political blueprint cannot be defined in the abstract; the partisans of sovereignty are rightfully required to describe the process of achieving sovereignty, to demonstrate the economic viability of a sovereign Québec and to take the political context into account. In the same way, the defenders of federalism or renewed federalism with profound changes cannot dissociate their recommendations from the lessons of history or the recent past, or from legal constraints.

History has been constituted by the chronic inability of the federal system of Canada to adapt to change, or to the life or needs of peoples. We are the country of the immutable Constitution. The recent past has been constituted by the refusal of English Canada to mend, even partially, the 1982 breach of trust and to reestablish a dialogue with Québec at the modest cost of marginal concessions, more symbolic than real. For, in the final analysis, as varied as our origins and cultural references are, I would say that we have nonetheless experienced the same events. None of us landed here from Mars last evening. We are well aware that English Canada rejected the timid, academic distinct society clause because it was perceived as a threat to a single Canada, a reflection of English Canada, that is, the present Canada, stuck in its centralizing, modular, symmetrical federalism.

If English Canadians so want to cement one vision of the future and kinship with one language and one culture into institutions that guarantee their integrity, they are entitled to live together in a country in their image. If the specificity and aspirations of Québec are recognized and accepted only if we make ourselves fit the mould of others, whether we want to or not, Canada is an impracticable country.

There is no law that says that peoples must live together as couples, and even less so when they are incompatible and unhappy together. The vicissitudes of Meech Lake have also demonstrated how inflexible and unwieldy the leaden charter that serves as our amending formula is. Many of the modifications called for in the most moderate versions of renewed federalism would require the unanimous agreement of the federal government and all the other provinces. I do not want to name names, but I need only mention the protagonists in the Meech Lake drama to deduce immediately the result of any new attempt. There is only one observation to be made regarding the Meech Lake disaccord and the outmoded amending mechanisms: there is no practical, internal way to change the balance of power to make Québec the master of the

principal levers of its development. What exists on paper leads from one frustration to another, from one stalemate to another, to a labyrinth of incomprehension and misunderstanding. We have to face it, any attempt to renew federalism is doomed to failure if it means, for example, that we have to go through the convoluted amending formula. After what we have just experienced, we have no right to expose Québec to another snub or to subject our economy to an additional period of uncertainty and stagnation.

We have long tried to undo the Gordian knot. All our attempts were doomed, but some of us did not yet realize it. Each failure added to the ranks of those who had finally concluded that the Gordian knot had to be cut. I, myself, am one of the last recruits who returned empty-handed from the failure of "le beau risque" that made so many Quebecers lose their last illusions.

We need more than simple negotiation to revive this petrified Constitution that has defied all efforts at renewal. The Prime Minister has declared his intention to discuss matters with the federal government, one on one, as equals. But even this is impossible without breaking the present mould, without extricating ourselves from this obstacle course in which everything depends on the good will of every Tom, Dick and Harry. (4:30 p.m.)

By blocking all possibilities of amending the confederative pact, its authors set the rudder on the same course for both proponents of renewed federalism and partisans of sovereignty, the course that leads to sovereignty. Though it formerly divided us, sovereignty will unite us in the end, at least from the standpoint of its being the sole effective process still open to us.

Our Prime Minister, our government and the people of Québec will make a mockery of themselves if they do not base the discussions leading to a new arrangement with their Canadian partner on a preliminary declaration of sovereignty. By this I mean a declaration by the National Assembly, acting in the wake of a decision democratically reached by the Québec electorate in a public consultation. This is also known as establishing a balance of power.

There has never been a true balance of power between Québec and Ottawa. Québec has never had sufficient political strength. Never again will a Québec Prime Minister have to suffer the fate of René Lévesque, who was deprived of the balance of power he had requested and weakened at a critical time by the division of his own people. It is now or never. We can expect nothing from empty gestures.

Others long ago learned that, in defending basic interests, a people cannot count solely on courteous discussions. This is at least one thing that Meech will have taught us.

We all know that, at a minimum, very significant, fundamental changes are required,

but it is not enough to be right. In addition, no one must doubt the political will of Québec. It is as a sovereign State that Québec must speak with Canada. It is as a sovereign State that Québec will manage its economic interdependence, redistribute regional powers internally, identify the common domains it wishes to maintain and the powers it decides to exercise, alone or with others, and as a sovereign State that it will be able, if it wishes, to be part of common structures and any federated political organization.

There is no other way to achieve anything that in the least resembles what Quebecers expect of us and, more importantly, what they now expect of themselves. This is the path taken by a genuine people when it wishes to secure a true country for itself. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Mrs. Cheryl Campbell Steer.

**Mrs. Cheryl Campbell Steer**

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, members of the Commission, I am honoured to join you in examining and analysing the political and constitutional status of Québec. In the coming days, I shall listen carefully and openmindedly to the opinions expressed by my fellow citizens concerning the current status of Québec and options for the future.

I would not have accepted this challenge had I not been convinced that, as a group, we can pool our efforts, our experience and our talent with a view to proposing feasible, practical and durable solutions to the current political and constitutional problems resulting from the failure of the Meech Lake Accord.

As you are aware, I am responsible, along with three other members of the Commission, for representing the wishes of the Québec business sector. Many of you in this room are also able to represent these wishes since you are well aware of the requirements of a prosperous and economically strong Québec and have personal business interests. I am glad we have this experience in common, for I am convinced that we need a strong economy to bolster our cultural demands. We must be assured that the changes in our current structure will strengthen rather than weaken our economy.

I am a chartered accountant by profession - though some would say by confession - now an associate of and a business consultant with one of the largest international firms of chartered accountants. I have always lived and worked in Montréal and in Québec City. Many of my clients are multinational corporations that envisage investing and expanding in Québec. My experience has consisted, in part, in explaining the situation in Québec to non-Quebecers. As a member of this

Commission, my role will notably be to observe and to listen to the public, and to you, my colleagues, and to contribute the viewpoint of the business world to the deliberations.

The solution we find will, of course, be particular to the Québec context. As an English-speaking Quebecer, I would say it will be a "made-in-Québec" solution. However, we are all deeply aware that we are living more and more in an international context and that this perspective must not be neglected. I believe my role as a member of this Commission will be to contribute my experience and knowledge in defining and clarifying, from a business standpoint, the issues underlying all the political and constitutional options to be examined, to help promote collective understanding of the matters studied and common meanings of terms that now have different connotations according to the segment of the population that hears them. I want to play a role in this crucial decision about the future of Québec and Canada.

Quelles que soient les recommandations finales de la Commission au terme des consultations et des délibérations qui lui sont propres, je crois qu'il nous faut assurer des propositions propices à un climat d'affaires favorable. Ce climat commercial favorable stimulera quant à lui la naissance et la croissance d'entreprises au Québec et la venue, au Québec, d'entreprises actuellement établies ailleurs, pour ainsi créer des emplois et, par conséquent, engendrer la prospérité.

If our economy is healthy, it is easier for Québec to resolve most of the socioeconomic and cultural problems that arise. On the other hand, these problems are more difficult to resolve if the economy is slackening. To achieve our economic objectives, we must have access to markets, the size and scope of which justify substantial investments in research and development and increases in capital, to profitable, productive facilities that require our obtaining capital at accessible rates, to qualified manpower and training in trades and professions that meet the needs of a constantly evolving society and to new technologies by investing in them, purchasing them outright or through licensing. A climate conducive to business also means a competitive taxation system and a stable political and social environment. In my opinion, clarification of the business issues includes the study of the incidence of each option proposed on the above mentioned essential economic factors and the determination, or at least the estimation, of the probable impact of our choices so that the consequences can be carefully gauged. A favourable business climate is only one of the foundations of economic prosperity.

We have also created a category of experienced entrepreneurs who want and are able to take advantage of business opportunities

beyond Québec's borders. We need a political and constitutional framework that favours and bolsters a strong, competitive Québec market and that clearly sets forth the future rules of the game, since the quality of life to which we aspire as Quebecers has its source in a thriving economy.

Each of us has a sum of knowledge acquired through experience. We must, however, listen carefully to the views expressed by our fellow citizens.

I believe that the Commission is pursuing specific objectives and that it provides a rare opportunity to examine the political and constitutional agreements now in force. It is also our duty to recommend improvements in this regard as members of a body that represents the different ways of thinking of a great variety of Quebecers, and Canada must listen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mrs. Campbell Steer. Mr. Guy d'Anjou will now have the floor.

**Mr. Guy d'Anjou**

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I am naturally very proud to sit with you as a school officer, that is, a school commissioner. I am proud to represent education and I am not only referring to elementary and secondary school education, but to college and university education as well.

I can assure you that I have come here with an open mind and that I intend to participate in the debates with great respect for the various opinions that will be expressed by the people and groups we will hear and by the members of this Commission. I intend to participate on a non-partisan basis and with great openmindedness. I believe that the objective we are all pursuing for the Québec people is to try to find the broadest possible consensus on matters fundamental to our collective future and that this is too important to take lightly or in a partisan manner.

The importance of education in the life of the Québec people is well known. I will not discuss this at length, telling you about heroic events in history of which you are aware. Nor will I give you a discourse about the past 25 or 30 years, but we know that the substantial progress achieved by Québec in the last 30 years is due, in large part, to sizable investments in education, notably in the democratization of education, that is, in making education accessible to all citizens of Québec, young and old. Of course, much remains to be done, and the role of education in the future of Québec will be even more important. The challenges we must face are substantial. We need only think of the fight against illiteracy among young people and

adults, the need for occupational training in keeping with the very rapid evolution of technology, and the need to prepare our work force to compete with international markets. The key to success is investment in brain power. For the various educators to be able to carry out their mandates properly, we require a political and constitutional framework that enables school boards, and colleges and universities in particular, to play their role fully in our society.

Education has very close ties with culture, and I am not referring simply to cultural security, but to cultural promotion in particular. Young people in our schools are already interested in the arts: music, the visual arts, the performing arts and so on. There are even closer ties between education and the economy. We are aware that all industrialized nations invest in education and that it is important for Québec that our young people receive a high quality education and sound fundamental training to succeed in life, and that this has major social ramifications. A good education results in a reduction of social costs, which increase when people have had insufficient schooling. There are also ties between education and values, personal and social values, the values of social justice, of sharing, of mutual respect, of respect for diverse cultures, of respect for nature and for the environment. Our society must continue to develop with the flow of history while remaining open to the world. And our challenge is to reconcile the promotion of a Francophone Québec with respect for the rights of aboriginal peoples and Quebecers of other origins and cultures. It is perhaps difficult to make some Quebecers understand this and even more difficult to make our neighbours understand. I thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. D'Anjou. Still proceeding in alphabetical order, with the letter D, we now ask Mr. Beaumier, who is replacing Mr. Desrosiers, to take the floor. Mr. Beaumier.

**Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier**

**Mr. Beaumier:** Unfortunately, I am the only substitute member at this table, but fortunately for those in good health. Our President has a fallen seriously ill so I must represent him, and I will try to do the best I can.  
(4:45 p.m.)

The Union des municipalités du Québec is pleased and proud to make its contribution to the Parliamentary Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. We believe that the initial objective of this approach is, above all, respect for the will of the citizens of Québec. This is why the Union des municipalités du Québec is proud to take part in the Commission.

Throughout the process, we want to listen to Quebecers and help find a common denominator that is likely to rally the greatest number of people possible. But in all this brainstorming, the *Union des municipalités du Québec* does not want us to lose sight of certain basic principles, discussed in our brief, founded on respect for and the primacy of the ratepayer and on the aspirations of local communities.

While this Commission is sitting, the Québec government and the municipalities are reviewing the fiscal pact and the possible sharing of certain responsibilities in order to offer Québec ratepayers better services at the lowest possible cost.

We believe that it is difficult to dissociate new political and constitutional realities and a balanced sharing of responsibilities. In a new blueprint for society, the dynamics of municipalities and the importance of regional differences must be taken into consideration. Any blueprint for major change in which the main collaborators of the government are not associated will, we believe, inevitably run up against difficulties and dissatisfaction, which could abort it. Because of this, the *Union des municipalités du Québec* wishes to collaborate and be closely associated with the required process of change.

Allow me to make a few, more personal, comments. For 17 years, I have worked in the municipal field and experience has shown me that any project that begins with dissension will be difficult to implement and, sometimes, doomed to failure. I was surprised by people's eagerness to know the findings of the Commission before our work even began. I feel that we must all listen to Quebecers and start with a clean slate so that we can approach this difficult exercise in a new spirit. I believe that there is enough goodwill around this table to advance the cause of Quebecers, which, in my opinion, can no longer be left to stagnate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Beaumier. Mr. Ghislain Dufour will now speak.

**Mr. Ghislain Dufour**

**Mr. Dufour (Ghislain):** Messrs. Chairmen, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, the Meech Lake Accord failed and there is nothing to be gained by dreaming about what could have been. We must go on to other things and agree on what the future of our country will be. It is from this perspective that the *Conseil du patronat* welcomed the creation of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, for which we congratulated Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Parizeau.

We are also happy, Messrs. Chairmen, to be

able to sit on the Commission and to make as many contributions as we possibly can, always emphasizing – not surprisingly – the economic aspects of the issue.

From the outset, we would like to define the two main parameters that will guide our reflections throughout the work of this Commission. The first is today's Québec. It is undeniable that, in the past few years, a feeling of great pride has developed in Québec. It is also undeniable that Québec has changed in countless ways. Today's Québec is not that of the 1980 Referendum. The past decade has, in fact, been a particularly important one in our history. The Québec economy clearly reflects the profound changes that have occurred here in the last few years. Through our savings, we have developed original economic and financial instruments, such as the *Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec*, the *Mouvement des caisses populaires et d'économie* Desjardins and the *Fonds de solidarité de la FTQ*, that now contribute to the growth of our economy.

Québec has trained extremely competent managers, whose skills compare favourably with those of any others in the world. Many of our large corporations have been remarkably successful on the international scene in numerous sectors of activity. Although they have their shortcomings, our health and educational systems are among the best in the world. In short, we have made considerable progress in a short span of time.

We must recognize, however, that our success is also attributable, in large part, to our belonging to the Canadian economy. We are in no way different from the rest of Canada in this regard. We are convinced that, without the characteristic synergy of a great country like Canada, in which talent and experience are diverse and widespread and in which resources are abundant, Québec could not have developed at such an accelerated rate. Québec's place in the Canadian confederation has contributed substantially, we feel, to the prosperity we now enjoy, just as Québec has contributed substantially to the high standard of living of all Canadians.

We must also recognize that, unfortunately, we have not yet solved all our problems. After seven years of continuous economic growth, the Québec economy, like the North American economy, is running out of steam. Our rate of unemployment exceeds 10 %. Our industrial structure is still too weak in several sectors. Poverty is still a major problem. If, despite these grave difficulties, Québec can still maintain a socially and economically acceptable quality of life for most Quebecers, is it not largely – and this is a question I am asking myself, Mr. Chairman – because it is part of the vast Canadian economy? If this vision of things is unjustified, this must be demonstrated to us.

Our second main parameter is based on our deep conviction that, regardless of the form that federal-provincial relations take, it will not be easy for most Quebecers to accept a reduction in their standard of living or in their socioeconomic benefits. All the changes envisaged in Québec should ensure that the quality of life of Quebecers is maintained and, of course, improved. When we refer to the quality of life, we do not only mean employment, but our health, social security and educational systems as well, which place us among the most privileged people in the world.

From the standpoint of maintaining and improving the quality of life of Quebecers, we must also remember that we have to adapt to the new context of free trade with the United States. Soon we will also have to deal with a unified Europe that is in the process of becoming a considerable economic power internationally. The recent upheavals and those still to come in Eastern Europe will soon have significant consequences.

For all these reasons, in order to remain strong economically and maintain our standard of living, we will definitely have to ask ourselves whether there is any advantage for Québec in breaking its economic ties with Canada. At a time when there is a major trend toward closer social and economic ties among many industrialized countries, sometimes at the expense, Mr. Chairman, of a part of their sovereignty, would it not be rash, to say the least, to row against the tide? In short, is it in Québec's interest to restrict its market, to question its economic ties with Canada? Is not the Europe of 1992 an illustration of the opposite approach? These are the questions, Messrs. Chairmen, that the Commission should keep in mind during its work.

In conclusion, the reality of contemporary Québec and the maintenance, if not the improvement of the standard of living of Quebecers will be the two main parameters guiding our discussions in the weeks to come. We believe, however, that we must affirm from the outset that there is little place in the current public debate for die-hard federalists of the 1980s, should there still be any. It has become absolutely essential to review in depth the federalism now practised in order to adapt it to the modern realities of the 1990s, without deviating from the principle of federalism itself.

We also believe that the distinct character of Québec, a specificity that has been recognized by all the First Ministers in the 1987 discussions, must be clearly affirmed and energetically defended while preserving our achievements and acting as much as possible in keeping with our history. It is in this spirit and in this framework, while listening as carefully as possible to the people we are to hear, that we undertake the work of the Commission and that

we will seek the best possible means to ensure the most promising future for Quebecers of all origins.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Dufour. Mrs. Louise Harel will now take the floor.

**Mrs. Louise Harel**

**Mrs. Harel:** On behalf of the people of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, the majority of whom voted yes in the 1980 Referendum, I express the hope that this Commission will mark the beginning of a new era for Québec. Despite the unanimous will to listen and then listen again, I will not hide the fact that I fear certain questions will be overlooked, by failing to look at them in a global context. This apprehension is not based so much on the make-up of our Commission, which, we must admit, reflects very little of the real Québec, nor is it caused by the contortions the government went through to maintain a numerical advantage. I hope that I am not being annoyingly partisan in simply affirming that the Commission is not a pure creation of the Holy Ghost. Women have long known that if the most qualified people were always chosen in all spheres of society, many more women would, today, have a seat in those places where decisions are made, including here. I would, for that matter, like to commend the Opposition for its decision to be egalitarian in choosing its delegation. We are three women and three men, and we hope that this heralds how Quebecers will be represented in the future.

At the Commission's first closed sitting, the chairmen themselves reminded us that we were not to be concerned with the appointments. Ultimately, the government majority decided on the Commission's final make-up, choosing notably to exclude aboriginal representation. Try as we might to correct this oversight by all manner of events, aboriginals will never be part of the family photograph we have taken this afternoon. Whatever the people of Québec decide about their political future, it must be acknowledged that the Indians wish to remain Indian, and have the right, conferred on them by history, to be recognized and treated as distinct nations within Québec itself. Offering them a seat, instead of waiting till they demand one, would have meant acknowledging that they are neither an ethnic group, nor a cultural or linguistic minority. I would have hoped for this show of generosity.

By looking at Québec in its totality, the vital issue — the uncertainty of our national identity — is not overlooked. Yes, I am afraid that our eyes have been so riveted on what we want to do or have, that we have lost sight of what we want to be. A national identity is not a personal choice, ready-made for each individual. The French, while they are Europeans, are not

Italians, who, in turn, are not Englishmen or Germans, and vice-versa. By failing to offer a common identity shared by Quebecers of all origins, we will remain French Canadians, that is to say, the largest ethnic minority group in Canada. And most of the newcomers choose and will continue to choose a Canadian identity.

As the 21st century dawns, everywhere on this planet we are witnessing two phenomena: market globalization and the affirmation of identities. The Commission should, therefore, be careful not to look at the future of Québec and Quebecers in terms of a simple transaction, for example, asking what kind of business will be carried on or not carried on with the rest of Canada, thereby avoiding the central question of our uncertain identity. We could well – and I sincerely hope so – agree at the end of our work here, to take over a few, many or all powers over occupational training, manpower, income security, local and regional development, immigration, communication, language matters and many others. Enthusiasm for a possible consensus on all these questions should not, however, allow us to lose sight of the inevitable question to be settled – our status as a minority or a majority group. In this sense, the question of country is at the heart of our work here, and the people would not understand our putting it aside.

In fact, there are not that many scenarios: either we are here to resurrect a last chance at renewed federalism, or to give sovereignty its first chance. I hope, on behalf of all those who are bogged down by underdevelopment and hopeless poverty, that this first chance will enable them to be part of the prosperity which some attribute to federalism. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
(5 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mrs. Harel. We now call on Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue**

**Mr. Hogue:** Messrs. Chairmen, MNAs, members of the Commission, dear colleagues, like most of you, like everyone for that matter, I feel honoured to be part of this inaugural sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec.

I am aware, as you are, of the historical importance of the work we are now undertaking, as well as the serious implications of the recommendations we must formulate at the end of the line. To begin with, I want to assure you of my full cooperation. I was designated to sit on this Commission by the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, on the recommendation of my colleagues in the Québec caucus, which has high hopes for the process we

have begun today, and strongly supports it.

As a Member elected from Québec, I am here, therefore, to represent the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. Since its foundation more than a century ago, the Progressive Conservative Party has been dedicated to establishing a rich and open cooperative relationship between Canadian Francophones and Anglophones. We firmly believe that it is possible and desirable to link the interests and aspirations of Quebecers with those of the other regions of Canada. Our faith in this ideal, which inspired the foundation of Canada, was recently expressed in the Meech Lake Accord, which, under conditions favourable to all Canadian regions and to the federation as a whole, corrected the injustice which excluded Québec from the Constitution in 1982. But, as Mr. Mulroney said this past weekend, the Meech Lake Accord is dead, and can never be resurrected. The failure of Meech has put Canada in an unprecedented political position, which dictates that we explore new avenues including the implications of our Canadian citizenship, and that we scrutinize our identity as Quebecers. This approach is, nonetheless, in keeping with the historical development of our political system.

Allow me for one minute to recall what Prime Minister Mulroney said on this subject last Thursday in the House of Commons. These were important words. They reflect my approach and aspirations, and I am very pleased to associate myself with them. And I quote: "Even if the present situation is very worrisome for us and for our country, we have been through very difficult times before. The Constitutional Act, 1791 gave rise to a long period of political agitation which was marked by the rebellions of 1837; the forced unification of Upper and Lower Canada in 1840 led to conflict and the burning down of the Parliament Buildings in 1849. Before being passed, the British North America Act was the object of an impassioned debate lasting ten years. Confederation itself was at once an act of separation of Upper Canada from Lower Canada, and an act of union; and federalism, the governmental system then adopted, was itself a sharing of sovereignty".

A little further on in his speech, we read: "The weakening of imperial ties with Great Britain at the turn of the century, the participation of the Canadian Army in two world wars and in the Korean War, the flag debate in 1965, the Québec Referendum in 1980 and the patriation of the Constitution in 1982 without Québec's consent, all brought about profound divisions and lively debate within the country, but nothing divided this country or roused more impassioned debate than the efforts undertaken to create an authentically Canadian formula for amending the Constitution. The problem was raised for the first time in 1926, following the

Balfour Report on relations between the British dominions, the Crown and the United Kingdom. But the necessity of obtaining the unanimous consent of Ottawa and of the ten provincial governments resulted in the failure of a series of attempts at patriation of our Constitution, and it remained an Act of the British Parliament which could only be amended in the United Kingdom. This is how important amendments were made in the Canadian Constitution, including the transfer to the federal government, in 1940, of jurisdiction in matters of unemployment insurance.

In 1981, following the Referendum of the year before, the very serious decision was made to patriate our Constitution without unanimous consent, more precisely, without the consent of Québec. An important element of the federalist camp's victory in Québec was the commitment of the federal Prime Minister of that time to renewed federalism, which meant that a "no" was not a vote in favour of the status quo. Few people, if any, who fought for Canada in this difficult referendum of ten years ago, would have thought that these reforms would ultimately be made by soliciting the support of all the provinces, except Québec.

In 1986, the ten First Ministers of the provinces agreed to reintegrate Québec into the constitutional family. The result of their efforts was the Meech Lake Accord, a reasonable and modest set of five constitutional amendments. Its non-ratification in June by two provincial legislatures turned the page on another chapter in the constant efforts of Canadians to improve their Constitution. This setback did not, however, mean the end of Canada. It meant rather that our national life had entered a new, more perilous phase. But danger and opportunity are the two sides of the same coin. "The dangers facing us provide us with an opportunity to rethink our system and to carve out a new future for the country".

We, as members of this Commission, should welcome, define and develop new concepts and mechanisms. All ideas and suggestions that could help to define the political, and constitutional future of Québec deserve our consideration, except for one: we cannot accept a view that would prolong the present state of affairs. The status quo no longer is; we are already on our way to a new Québec and a new Canada.

As you know, the federal government has set up an advisory group to stimulate thought and discussion among Canadians. In Alberta, a special commission has also begun to reflect on Alberta's constitutional future, as well as Canada's. And other provinces are defining mechanisms to do likewise.

The Progressive Conservative Party believes that all those who share in the benefits and responsibilities of belonging to this country should be able to take part in defining its

future; but we also recognize that Quebecers have the right, even the duty, to consult with each other and to search together for paths to their own future.

My presence here is proof that we are, as members of the Progressive Conservative Party and Quebecers, united in this process. I am delighted that the National Assembly, in forming this Commission, has decided to invite members of the federal political parties. We all hold the trust and hopes of our citizens in our hands. The party I represent firmly believes that Quebecers, through their federal representatives, can play a vital role in the affairs of one of the richest and most respected countries in the world, and can display all the vigour and originality their individuality offers. And I am proud to say that, thanks to the political group I represent here, and its Leader, Quebecers now have a decisive influence within the federal government.

All discussions on the political and constitutional future of Québec should of necessity be concerned with the division of powers and responsibilities between the two levels of representation, and the presence around this table of Members of the National Assembly and the House of Commons will undoubtedly make for a fruitful dialogue on this question.

In concluding, Mr. Chairman, I wish to reiterate the Progressive Conservative Party's profound willingness to make a constructive and active contribution to the work of this Commission. We will display the same determination in serving the deepest interests of Québec that we showed throughout the Meech Lake Accord negotiations. We would also like to bear witness to our faith in the greatness of Canada's destiny. I have no doubt that we can, with realism, lucidity and serenity, carry out the central mandate to which we have committed ourselves, which is to express and fulfil the hopes of our fellow citizens in a better future for themselves and their children.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Hogue. We now call on Mr. Richard Holden.

**Mr. Richard Holden**

**M. Holden:** Merci, M. le Président. M. le Président, M. le coprésident, la collectivité que je représente entretient beaucoup d'espoir - je ne peux pas parler d'optimisme, mais elle entretient beaucoup d'espoir - quant aux résultats de nos délibérations. Cet espoir est en partie fondé sur la confiance, que je ressens également, envers l'intégrité et l'intelligence de nos deux présidents.

M. le Président, la loi instituant la présente Commission commence par un long préambule qui expose les principes de notre travail. L'un

d'entre eux, dont l'Assemblée nationale convenait à l'unanimité en adoptant ladite loi, est le suivant: «Considérant que le Québec entend poursuivre cet objectif dans un esprit de justice et d'ouverture, dans le respect des droits et des institutions de la communauté québécoise d'expression anglaise.»

M. le Président, au cours de toutes les audiences et de toutes nos discussions, l'une de mes principales préoccupations sera de souligner et de rappeler cette assurance très importante aux personnes qui se prononceront ici et à mes collègues présents: tout groupe ou individu se présentant devant nous dans l'intention de promouvoir un Québec souverain devra probablement répondre aux questions suivantes. Quelles garanties proposez-vous pour assurer à la collectivité anglophone le respect de ses droits et institutions, de fait comme de droit? L'usage de l'anglais devant les tribunaux, à l'Assemblée nationale, dans nos écoles et au sein de nos institutions sera-t-il encastré dans la constitution éventuelle d'un Québec souverain? Aurons-nous toujours le droit sacré de faire éduquer nos enfants en anglais dans un Québec indépendant? Le droit de publier et de diffuser en langue anglaise sera-t-il intégralement protégé dans un Québec indépendant?

M. le Président, ce ne sont là que quelques-unes des questions que je poserai au cours des jours et des mois à venir. Les réponses seront soigneusement notées, non seulement par les anglophones, mais également par ces Québécois de toutes origines, d'esprit juste et ouvert, auxquels fait allusion l'énoncé de principe que je viens de citer.

You have no doubt noticed, Mr. Chairman, that nowhere in the preamble to Bill 90, the Act which establishes the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, in no place does the word "Canada" appear. It is as if Canada no longer existed, as if it had disappeared in the fog over Meech Lake. No, Mr. Chairman, Canada is still a great country on the world scene, respected, admired and loved - yes loved, by millions of Quebecers.

M. le Président, une question revient souvent: qui parle au nom du Canada? Eh bien, espérons qu'ils sont nombreux autour de cette table ceux qui parleront au nom du Canada. Je compte sur les députés fédéraux, ou du moins sur deux d'entre eux, pour parler comme moi et comme le député de D'Arcy McGee et d'autres encore au nom du Canada. Je prie les membres du Parti libéral qui siègent ici, ainsi que les membres de l'Assemblée nationale, de s'exprimer ouvertement en faveur du Canada, avec autant de vigueur en public qu'ils le font lors de nos conversations privées, ici à l'Assemblée nationale. Je prie enfin d'autres participants ici présents de parler franchement en faveur d'un système fédéral renouveau et revigoré.  
(5:15 p.m.)

I have learned one thing since I have been sitting in the National Assembly, Mr. Chairman. And that is, that the MNAs who advocate sovereignty or independence are more accepting and appreciative of someone who is openly and honestly federalist, than someone who straddles the fence or is an opportunist. I, myself, can understand a supporter of independence better than I can understand someone who says: "I am a federalist, but it is better that I appear to support sovereignty". It's like Yvon Deschamps' famous joke: What Québec wants is an independent Québec in a united Canada... strong and independent. In any case, you all know the joke. We cannot have both, Mr. Chairman, and for me the choice is clear. I choose Canada with Québec as an integral part of it. I hope that my wishes will be given the same respect I give to the arguments of those who believe in sovereignty. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Holden. I now call on Mrs. Claire-Hélène Hovington.

**Mrs. Claire-Hélène Hovington**

**Mrs. Hovington:** Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, ladies and gentlemen, I, too, am very honoured to take part in this fundamental debate, which marks an important period in the history of Québec and its institutions. This Parliamentary Commission certainly provides Quebecers of all persuasions with a propitious opportunity to identify their place within North America. Above all, it enables us to review how and in what way Québec has become a truly distinct society.

To really grasp this notion of distinct society, we must briefly recall history. Before 1960, Québec society developed through its unrelenting, hard work, and its unshakable will to bring to life those immense territories that make up the regions of Québec as we know them today. Quebecers knew how to work the soil and make it bountiful, and develop the rural milieu. With their human resources, they also contributed to the industrial development of many cities in Québec. During the 1960s, we witnessed a profound transformation. This period marked a major turning point in the education sector with the Parent Report, which entrenched the democratization of education. In the economic field, Quebecers gave themselves good solid tools for development. And as an example, I would like - not simply to please one of the two chairmen of the Commission - to cite the Caisse de dépôt et placement, which today has assets of \$ 37 500 000 000, as well as the Régie des rentes, the Société générale de financement, and other government corporations which have greatly contributed to the development and strengthening of the Québec economy.



During this same period, two other sectors were quickly identified as having a major stake in consolidating Québec's distinct character. I am thinking of culture and communications, for which departments were created during the 1960s and 1970s. The last three decades during which Québec was able to affirm itself socially, culturally and economically have been the setting for many new developments on the constitutional level. Mr. Chairman, discussions on reforming our institutions, on Québec's place in the Canadian federation of today, did not begin yesterday. We have only to recall the Jean Lesage slogan: "masters in our own house", or Daniel Johnson's "equality or independence", René Lévesque's "sovereignty-association", and Robert Bourassa's "distinct society". All these political formulas have a common denominator: to enable Québec to fully express its cultural, social, political and economic uniqueness.

Time has taught us that we must use all the means necessary to express who we are. A context must be created which will allow us to protect what we have achieved, so that the blueprint for our future reflects our social and cultural originality. As for the decisions regarding our constitutional future made at the end of this Commission's hearings, they should, assuredly, give priority to maintaining our economic strength. In addition to this aspect, I intend to concern myself in a more particular way with issues relating to art and culture.

Mr. Chairman, a society is reflected in its culture. A people distinguishes itself first by its language, but also by the dynamism and originality of its performing and creative artists. Arts and letters quickly become indispensable tools in the cultural survival of a society. Historically, Quebecers have shown a strong willingness to strengthen the cultural sector in Québec. We insist on protecting the Francophone character of our distinct society, and I hope that this concern will be ever present during our exchanges on Québec's future.

The mandate of the cultural affairs sector is one of the most fundamental for the Québec State - that is, to support the collective process of affirming our identity, and to promote the expression of excellence through creativity and the cultivation of our heritage. This identity, particular to Québec, led to the passage of two major pieces of legislation in 1987 and 1988. These gave legal and socioeconomic status to performing and creative artists. I am, of course, referring to Bill 90, passed in December 1987, the Act respecting the professional status and conditions of engagement of performing, recording and film artists, and to Bill 78, the Act respecting the professional status of artists in the visual arts, arts and crafts and literature, passed in December 1988. In fact, as a member of the Committee on Culture at that time, I had the privilege of collaborating in the drafting of

these very important legislative measures. The adoption of Bills 78 and 90 puts Québec in the forefront of Western societies with regard to recognition and protection of artists by their government.

Mr. Chairman, Québec is the only territory in North America with a Francophone majority, and what is more, since this majority represents barely 2 % of the North American population, Québec cannot risk entrusting other governments with the task of defining and protecting what fundamentally distinguishes it from other societies. For Québec Francophones, the Québec government seems to be the only one capable of defining the mechanisms which will ensure the preservation and development of the French character, and of Québec culture in general. We must, then, arrive at a clear definition of shared constitutional responsibilities in matters of culture, so as to respect the distinct character of Québec society by confirming, to begin with, the decisive role of the Québec government in preserving and promoting the French fact in Québec, and the Québec culture related to it.

Mr. Chairman, the work of this Commission will offer the different speakers and, more particularly, the representatives of the cultural milieu a special opportunity to put forward, as objectively as possible, the recommendations they intend to make so that the new constitutional option selected can preserve what has been achieved, and, I hope, promote the cultural growth of our society. Bill 90, which established this Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, specifies in its preamble that Quebecers are free to determine their own destiny, their political status and their economic, social and cultural development. I find this assertion altogether fair and legitimate. I believe that the climate in Québec at the present time is right for dealing with an issue as important as our collective future. I hope that the broadest consensus possible will emerge, so that, together, we can build not only our political and constitutional future, but also, and this is very important, our social and cultural future as well. Thank you.

**The Chairman: (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mrs. Hovington. Let me assure you that in mentioning the Caisse de dépôt, you gave pleasure, not only to one of the two chairmen who did a little work on it twenty years ago, and who was a member of the board at that time, but also to the one who was its Chairman over the last ten years.

We should be calling on Mr. Louis Laberge, now. For those of you who do not know about it, our friend, Louis Laberge, was involved in a car accident this morning. He was not driving, his wife was, as is usual. They skidded a bit. He travelled the last few miles by taxi. He was here a little before the start of the afternoon sitting,

but he was not really very well, so he has gone to have a rest. If he returns tonight, we will certainly hear him. In the meantime, and not at all in accordance with union rules respecting rotating shifts, but in simple alphabetical order, I call on Mr. Gérald Larose.

**Mr. Larose:** Had you given me his time, I could have done two or three paragraphs.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Less than ten minutes, Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Gérald Larose**

**Mr. Larose:** Mr. Chairman, there are not really many examples in the history of Québec of events such as the one that begins today, for it must be acknowledged that, in spite of the difficulties choosing the members of this Commission, in spite of the absences we have criticized, which proportionately increase our own responsibility, we are in the midst of a democratic debate, a democratic debate which was altogether non-existent when the Act of Union, 1840 was imposed on us, a democratic debate that never took place when the Canadian Confederation was created in 1867, a democratic debate singularly ridiculed when the Canadian Constitution was patriated without our consent in 1982, a democratic debate which was not held when the absolutely minimal conditions for our approval of the Constitution were identified, a deal that was swallowed up by the black waters of Meech Lake.

While the past can heighten our consciousness and sharpen our ability to analyse facts and arrive at conclusions, we will be concerned here with the future, the future of Québec. From all points of view, it is understood that the present system has had its day and that the time for change is upon us. The members of the Commission here today have convictions for which they will seek support, but at this stage in our history, simply expressing our convictions is not enough. There are still necessary changes which must be identified. Above all, we must still identify how these changes will be arrived at. This is what is called strategy.

Messrs. Chairmen, I want to make myself clear. In my opinion, the models themselves are not really the problem, except for those who want to disguise or gloss over the status quo. The problem is how to get there. Who around this table can still claim that, in negotiating as we negotiated, without a clear or popular mandate, therefore, not from a position of strength, we had the right strategy? We must have the courage to analyse the realities. What caused Meech Lake to collapse was not Elijah Harper, it was not Manitoba, it was not Clyde

Wells, but rather Canadians themselves, who, and rightly so for that matter, cannot accept the idea of weakening the centralized nature of the Canadian federation, and who aspire, as do Quebecers, to a strong central State which adequately carries out all its mandates. They too want to control their development, ensure their fulfillment and live in an autonomous way. The problem is that we don't agree on the State: for us, it is Québec; for them, it is Ottawa.

Canada has always been a misunderstanding, an ambiguity, an artificial construction. Has the time not come to put an end to futile quarreling? Let us each have our own State. Let us establish civilized relations based on equality, like other sovereign countries. But I am already outlining a direction to take, a matter that this Commission will debate abundantly.

Precisely, what do we expect from this Commission? Firstly, that it be up to the task of fulfilling the aspirations and looking out for the interests of the Québec people, and that it not be trapped into partisan games of one kind or another. Secondly, that it occasion a formidable public debate in which the maximum amount of information can circulate freely. Thirdly, that it develop a clear strategic plan that will carry Québec into the future. And fourthly, that it recommend a definite process which would include the popular mandates to be sought, and a strict timetable to follow.  
(5:30 p.m.)

The CNTU is perfectly comfortable with the exercise we begin today. A home-grown Québec product itself, the CNTU is no stranger to Québec or Quebecers. For decades now, it has borne the aspirations of hundreds of thousands of workers who are citizens as well. We have lived through humiliation at work with regard to our rights; we have shared great expectations and suffered disillusionment as well. We are familiar with the difficult daily exercise of having rights respected and freedoms won. We are sensitive to these difficulties, having experienced them with those who find themselves in a minority position in a hostile environment. In this regard, our testimony could be useful. One thing we can count on, however – and this represents a change since the time of the 1980 Referendum – is the great serenity which prevails in Québec. This was so last May, even before the death of Meech Lake, when, at the CNTU congress, more than 2000 delegates representing 250 000 members clearly opted for Québec's independence. It is still true today. This confidence regained will make us, collectively, less vulnerable to the scarecrows and bogeymen who will undoubtedly be roused by dominant interests, fear-mongers and alarmists. We are ready to discuss numbers and the economy, to assess all the models put forward. Let it be well understood, however, that we will not do this in an atmosphere of terrorism such

as we have seen in times gone by. Still, we want to get to the heart of the matter, which is not that complex after all. It begins with Québec's recognition of the characteristics and collective rights particular to its main constituents: the aboriginal nations, the Anglophone minority, the ethnic communities and the Francophone majority. The failure of Canada, for that matter, is, in large part, the result of deficiencies in this regard. We are striving for a Québec that is richer, more democratic, more open, more egalitarian, more unified, a Québec that is master of its fate, not a victim of it. All this will not happen automatically with independence. For us, however, independence has become a necessary condition for achieving our goals. The time has come to define who we are, without asking permission. We are faced with a formidable challenge. This is an historic moment. Each of us, in our own way, is responsible for Québec's freely determining its own destiny, with serenity, with confidence, with pleasure even. While I have made up my mind, you will still find me loyal, open, ready to listen, sensitive to other opinions but resolutely looking to the future. Messrs. Chairmen, I am at your service, convinced that you will steer the ship safely into port. All the best in your work!

**The Chairman (M. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Larose. I now call on Mr. Jacques Léonard.

**Mr. Jacques Léonard**

**Mr. Léonard (Jacques):** Mr. Chairman, in the coming weeks we will listen to our fellow citizens and we will ponder with them the country of our children and grandchildren. We are the people of Québec, and speaking our own French language in the very heart of America will be an advantage, not a curiosity or a disability as it is in Canada. We want to work, not collect unemployment insurance or social welfare. Quebecers want to be players participating fully in their own development and in their future, not a minority group to be simply tolerated. And because of this, they want to create a land and institutions in their own image in a free, democratic and sovereign Québec.

Our parents had a certain vision of the country which has led us, since the 1960s, to define its limits as being Québec, and to provide it with an economy that is strong, dynamic and modern as well as original, in short, a Québec model, despite the constraints of the federal system. The economic emancipation of Quebecers has long been manifest in the dynamism of its workers and entrepreneurs, but for some decades now, it has been based on powerful levers such as the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, the Montreal Exchange, and a network of solid

financial institutions, particular to Québec, which also benefit from regulations that are the envy of our neighbours. Since 1960, our men and women have become educated, as is true of all other industrialized countries. Our public service is large and competent. It has the expertise needed to administer a sovereign country. Québec produces \$ 150 000 000 000 in goods and services, and compares favourably with countries such as Denmark, Austria and Belgium. We already have an open economy, and, relatively speaking, we export more than the United States and Japan, and this, while markets no longer have barriers. Supported by facts such as these, organizations like the Mouvement Desjardins, the Bank of Montréal and Merrill Lynch have concluded that a sovereign Québec would be viable, indeed prosperous.

For 40 years now, economic areas have not coincided with political areas. We have seen the creation of economic partnerships between sovereign countries, in Europe as in North America and Asia, and even on a global scale with GATT. We have been keeping pace with the trend toward market globalization to such an extent that the Toronto-Dominion Bank is of the opinion that Québec, more than any other, will probably be the one to reap the greatest benefits from the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. Obviously, I suspect it of jealousy, of course, or of wanting to spur its own troops on. But the international determination to open markets, and the close economic ties between Québec and Canada, particularly the province of Ontario, and, above all, with the United States constitute the best guarantee that Québec, once sovereign, will continue to grow with its partners in the same context. In fact, Québec will be the United States' eighth trading partner. The experience of many others tells us that, for a country of its size, sovereignty, far from being a hindrance to economic development, is a necessity. Québec will be in a better position to coordinate its goals, its policies, all its actions. No more rifts with the other provinces, no more costly procrastination, and, above all, cooperation between the State and private enterprise will be better integrated, simpler, less cumbersome, more flexible, more efficient through all its networks in order to compete on a global scale. Québec's economic strategies correspond to these world trends. It now urgently needs a political counterpart, and that is sovereignty.

A democratic and economically stable Québec will be a reliable and sound partner in its international dealings. This growth, this development is the result of individual effort, of course, but is also due to the efforts of Québec as a country with a commonly shared vision animating its common efforts. Because of federalism, they will say; despite federalism, I reply, especially since, after Meech and forever after, provinces are expected to be all the same.

By recognizing that Québec has its own distinct economy in the language of Meech, we also recognize that the levers are different, that the goals and strategies must be adapted to the Québec context, and be, therefore, original, which makes the exercise of total power or sovereignty a necessity. Beyond waxing poetic about the Rockies, what is this federalism which we cannot seem to renew after 123 years of trying? The shortcomings are well known: overlapping of all kinds, lack of cohesion on policies between the two levels of government, duplication of services, endless discussions, one-upmanship between the provinces, competition between the provincial and federal governments, etc., which have led to waste and to the inability to plan or exercise budgetary control, all of which are exactly the opposite of what we need.

Furthermore, not only is the analysis, over a long period, of the federal government's cash flow inconclusive in favour of federalism, but from here on, there will be a federal government debt of \$ 358 000 000 000 to be paid, which is growing by \$ 30 000 000 000 a year. This unfortunate reality has led the federal government to gradually opt out of funding for unemployment insurance, old age pensions for those who are better off, and Established Programs Financing until its contribution to health care and post-secondary education will be nil in 1998. This sad reality has also prompted the Bank of Canada to raise its discount rate in order to fight inflation, which is largely fuelled by the federal government, hitting the Québec economy in the process with a real interest rate that is higher than Ontario's.

Not only is Ottawa's precarious financial situation leading it to free itself of obligations, but it is also affecting Québec's financial framework by increasingly depriving the Québec government of what little funds it has at its disposal. And despite all these measures, the financial health of the federal government has not improved. This system, if maintained, would inevitably lead to the bankruptcy of the federal government and of Canada, Québec included.

Consequently, Mr. Chairman, we will listen with interest and openness to our fellow citizens as they tell us what they wish to become and how they see the future of our country, Québec. At this stage, I, like many others, think that we need, as a first step, to reclaim all our laws, all our taxes, all our agreements. Then, it will be up to us to decide on the agreements and partnerships we want to enter into with Canada and other countries. Reversing these steps resulted, finally, in the failure of Meech. The international economic context requires fast decision-making, which is impossible with the present constitutional framework. Québec also needs to act quickly. It needs, first of all, to recover all its powers, to achieve sovereignty.

At a time when clear-cut decisions must be made, we must not create confusion by playing with words or playing for time, or we will once again be left with the status quo, plus a few inevitably backward steps, well couched in high-sounding and soothing declarations. We are concerned here, Mr. Chairman, with establishing a political foundation on which we can continue to build Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Léonard. I now call on Mr. Robert Libman.

#### **Mr. Robert Libman**

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is with pleasure and some pride that I come before this Commission's members today. I want immediately to express my apprehension about the interpretation that reporters in the province and across the country are providing of the exact mandate of this Commission. It is clear that the media have not come to a consensus on the Commission's objectives. Because our task is such an important one, I am forced to wonder about the perception of those appointed to the Commission. We could have fun guessing at the names the Commission will be given by some of its members. The Parti Québécois, for example, might call the Commission "Independence Before or After a Referendum"; the Liberals, "The Balance Between Sovereignty and the Economic Community"; or, the union movements, "Let's Ensure Justice among Workers in an Independent Québec". To a certain extent, each member seated at this table has an almost set position.

This caricature is simply an attempt to make you understand that we must not shut ourselves off from the multitude of alternatives that are available to us. However – and I go along with the general consensus – the status quo, the non-adherence of Québec to the 1982 Canadian Constitution, quite simply seems impracticable for reasons known to us all. Our political group believes that the basic choice of sovereignty-association as an instrument of constitutional negotiation would be unhealthy for the entire population. It would be unsound because the two concepts comprising the formula are incompatible: on the one hand, sovereignty refers to the political and economic independence of a society and, on the other, association implies the desire of a dismembered Canada to openly associate with the very cause of its demise.  
(5:45 p.m.)

I join the Leader of the Opposition in stating that this debate must be free of secrets, threats and false perceptions; the terms that we use, and their meanings, must be absolutely transparent. The only real choice that this Commission and our society will have to make is

between total independence – a total break from the rest of Canada with all the obligations and responsibilities this entails – and the Canadian federation. The remainder will be a way of drawing out the debate, which will diminish the energies available for dealing with questions of greater importance, namely the economy, education, social services, etc.

Le 20 mai 1980, les Québécois ont démocratiquement choisi leur place et leur rôle au sein de la Confédération canadienne: ils ont choisi le Canada. Some answer that today's context is different, since Québec was rejected by the rest of Canada in light of the failure of Meech. Never forget, Messrs. Chairmen, that support of the Meech Lake Accord by Manitoba and many other Canadians was withdrawn not for reasons of the rejection of Québec, but really owing to the Québec government's use of the "notwithstanding" clause in 1988 to suspend individual rights. Most of all, let us try not to speak of rejection on the part of Canada. This record, which is already too worn, has been politically beneficial, but is not really honest. The fiercest opponents of the Accord recognized the distinct society, which is clear to all in this room, but could not accept its taking precedence over the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The supremacy of the individual is the very basis of a free and democratic society.

Furthermore, in no way do I share the viewpoint of political analysts that the key to the victory of the 1980 Referendum was the promise of a renewed federalism. Unfortunately for all who have built careers around this brilliant analysis, the reality is perhaps much simpler. When it came time to ask oneself: "Would I want to leave Canada?", people responded mainly on the basis of this question. Unfortunately for all who favour independence, the question will remain unresolved until independence has been achieved, regardless of the number of referendums or commissions such as this one that attempt to finally settle the question. The painful reality is that this question will never be resolved.

Mr. Chairman, at times, very sincerely and with a very open mind, I try to understand the advantages and the options of Québec sovereignty. Who knows, perhaps independence is the solution to all our problems! Perhaps with the independence of Québec, sovereignty could finally achieve the objectives for which we have fought, and we could arrive at a consensus on reintegration. Or, better still, perhaps we could conduct a referendum on qualified independence in which Québec would be sovereign for five years in order to see if the population were capable of sovereignty on a permanent basis.

In any case, Mr. Chairman, I return to the conclusion that it is still unrealistic. We cannot play with concepts like these when the consequences are the survival of a country.

There are problems in this country, problems which we view as quite grave; however, it must be said that abroad these problems do not appear very serious. The reality, in the eyes of the international community, is that Canada, with all its faults, is still the envy of the world. From a global perspective, there are no problems in this country. We are perhaps too comfortable. Maybe it is even a sense of collective guilt given the problems of others that leads us to create problems for ourselves. Why do we constantly look for predicaments? Why are we always seeking to redefine ourselves? Some say that, since we have never collectively defined ourselves here at home, there are enormous differences between what it means to be a Quebecer and what it means to be a Canadian. Our leaders bombard us with their definitions, and this makes the task of self-definition even more difficult. For example, the Vice-President of the Parti Québécois recently stated that a Quebecer is a person who lives within the territory of Québec and likes it enough to consider it his homeland. But, if I apply this definition, the majority of Québec residents are not Quebecers. Still, this definition is not my own, nor is it that of many other Quebecers who scorn the monopolization of terms by other people. Québec is my home, but my homeland is Canada.

J'ai d'ailleurs répété plusieurs fois en ces lieux que le fait d'être Québécois d'expression anglaise ne fait de personne un Québécois de seconde zone. Comme l'immigrant qui obtient la citoyenneté canadienne n'est pas moins Canadien que quiconque. Nous sommes tous des immigrants dont aucun n'est supérieur aux autres. En réalité, les seuls qui peuvent prétendre à ce droit ne sont pas, justement, des immigrants; ce sont ceux qui, de fait, ont été exclus de la présente Commission. En ce qui me concerne, nos peuples autochtones sont au coeur de toute discussion sur la souveraineté.

We can never speak of independence, or sovereignty, or self-determination, without including these people and the lessons of last summer. I do not accept the claims of those who maintain that there will be only one sovereignty in Québec, or of others who maintain that Québec's aboriginal peoples will simply be forced to integrate into the majority and realize that their existence as a people is coming to an end. We either break apart and have each part negotiate across its borders or barricades, or we discover a formula for cooperation that respects the differences of each community binding this country together from one end to the other. I am an architect, Mr. Chairman, who has found himself in politics by accident. I am therefore on this Commission not as a career politician with specific interests, but as a citizen who upholds his principles at all costs. I feel I am a Canadian not so much because I identify with my

neighbours but because, being a little different, I believe that there is another way of getting along together and that this way is still the example for the world of the future.

Enfin, comme les autres Canadiens qui siègent à cette Commission, je ferai de mon mieux pour trouver une solution. Au contraire, toutefois, des autres Canadiens qui siègent à cette Commission, je fonderai ma solution, quelle qu'elle soit, sur un Canada plus fier, plus uni. Peut-être accepterai-je un compromis quant au processus, mais jamais quant à mon identité. De nombreux Québécois, d'expression française et anglaise, tout comme ceux dont la langue maternelle est l'italien, le chinois ou le grec, souhaitent que le pays fonctionne avec notre province, le Québec, comme partie intégrante de ce pays. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Libman. Our afternoon sitting is nearly over. I would like to conclude with three comments related to organization. Tomorrow, you have the program for the sitting; since we had to draw it up from the information we had on the preliminary briefs, however, we included the QTC in tomorrow afternoon's agenda, and, unfortunately, they have informed us that their final brief will not be ready. Therefore, tomorrow morning's sitting will proceed as planned. Tomorrow afternoon, we are going to begin later. We will begin at 4:30 p.m. with the ACEF, and we will not have the QTC tomorrow afternoon; there will be no change in tomorrow evening's agenda. So, tomorrow afternoon's program has been changed.

Second organizational matter: you all remember being informed that when the briefs are presented, there is a period for Commission members to speak, ask questions and make comments, and that, in an attempt to carry this out in the most orderly fashion possible, you must register in the morning with the chair. I want to remind you, more precisely, that in the morning you must indicate which of the day's briefs you will be registering for. You may register for all, if you wish. We are going to try to balance out the questions and comments, but you must not register after each presentation. Register at the beginning of the day for one particular presentation or for all of them.

Third point: we told you that each brief received would be analysed and a short summary prepared, including questions, which you may or may not use. Of course, for the first briefs, since our deadline and the start of our sittings were quite close, you did not receive these summaries. What about the summaries for tomorrow's texts, and those for the day after? The summaries for the briefs to be presented to you tomorrow and the day after will be distributed at this evening's sitting. This is not a gimmick to ensure that you will all be there, it

has just turned out that way. We were unable to prepare them beforehand.

This said, members who have not taken a kit, which provides a variety of information on all sorts of things, are asked to go to the reception desk and get one. If you do not know what it is, this is a sign that you have not taken one, so go and get one. They were at the entrance this morning, for those who were able to obtain one.

We will resume this evening at 7:30 p.m., with the first brief being presented by Mr. Laberge, if he is among us. If not, we will hear Mr. Maciocia. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. This sitting is now terminated.

(Sitting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.)

(Resumed at 7:36 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will begin this evening's session. Mr. Cosmo Maciocia has the floor.

#### Mr. Cosmo Maciocia

**Mr. Maciocia:** Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, I am very honoured to take part in the Parliamentary Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, whose activities are commencing today.

Over the coming weeks, we will have the opportunity to hear the thoughts of Quebecers from all regions about their political aspirations. No doubt, Mr. Chairman, following the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, citizens have come to an even greater realization of the importance of the collective issues we are up against.

What kind of framework do Quebecers want for their future? What will the Québec of tomorrow be like? That is the essential question. I am confident that our deliberations will guide us toward a constructive and realistic solution, but it seems to me that the success of this exercise in reflection and consultation depends heavily on the openness of spirit that will characterize our sessions. I for one am entering them with an open mind and without speculating on the direction they will take.

Over the centuries, Québec society has opened up to the world. Gradually, thanks to the efforts of men and women, it has ceased to be inward-looking and closed, especially since the Quiet Revolution. This opening up was accompanied by a growing interest in immigration and the cultural communities, which today have taken on great importance in our demographic, economic, social and cultural context.

I am in a good position to know about this, Mr. Chairman. No doubt you will have guessed by my name and my accent that I am of Italian origin. I am at once Italian and proud to be a Quebecer. With my family, I chose to adopt

Québec in 1964. I have been here for 26 years now, and I am very comfortable. Québec is one of the warmest host countries to be found. Leaving one's country to start over somewhere else is not easy. More often than not, it is an agonizing decision; however, a person emigrates because he hopes for a better quality of life. In Québec, this quality of life can be largely attributed to its inhabitants. Latin peoples are, as we say here, very hospitable.

When we adopt someone, he becomes part of the family. When an immigrant arrives in a new country, family takes on a great importance. If the immigrant can depend on the friendship of Quebecers, his integration is made easier. I do say integration, Mr. Chairman, since, unlike our American neighbours, who have opted for assimilation, Québec possesses the open-mindedness necessary for appreciating difference. In addition, whereas twenty or thirty years ago immigrants developed a strong feeling of being a part of Canada, their host country, immigrants settling in Québec today call themselves Quebecers as much as Canadians. And, since each one of us has the freedom to be able to enrich an entire community with our knowledge and talents, Québec has become a veritable mosaic.

Because of its status as a metropolis, as a big city, Montréal has remained the heart of different communities contributing to building the Québec of today and of tomorrow. One has only to consider the contribution of different groups, particularly to the culture and economy, to realize the quality and importance of this contribution. Each finds his own place. Immigrants need Québec as much as Québec needs immigrants. It is therefore important that we offer them the best possible living conditions, so that we can all benefit. It is also essential that new Quebecers be able to integrate into the French-speaking community and into the work force.

I am convinced, Mr. Chairman, that we can take on this challenge if we implement truly effective programs that facilitate learning the French language. Newcomers will place themselves along side those who are best able to receive them and assist them in earning an honest living. So far, Québec and Canada have made a definite effort in this direction. Of course, there are improvements to be made. Mr. Chairman, I emphasize, in a few words, how fortunate we are to live in Québec, where economic stability and the reliability of institutions are the envy of many a country. For people arriving in unfamiliar surroundings, it is reassuring to know that the administration of the economy is effective and sound. This is a definite sign of prosperity. Québec has already established its reputation in this regard. However, Mr. Chairman, in the recommendations that we make on the political and constitutional future of Québec, we must first and foremost

ensure that Québec's economic stability will be preserved. This will guarantee a better future for all the citizens of Québec, the kind of future we desire for them.

If there is one objective at which our Commission must aim when called to reflect upon what place the Québec society will hold in Canada, it is surely to provide the Québec government with the political means to allow immigrants and members of the cultural communities to become fullfledged citizens of our society. And, since the cultural communities have made an important contribution to the economic, social and cultural development of Québec and of Canada, it is to be hoped that they will actively participate in the constitutional decisions concerning the political future of Québec and Canada, and, I repeat, actively.

(Speaks in Italian.)

To conclude, I am convinced that our sessions will help Québec to redefine its ties with the rest of Canada and to find its place in the North American community. I thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Maciocia. I was going to add: (speaks in Italian), but I am not absolutely sure of my accent, so I will not go any further.

Okay. Mrs. Pauline Marois.

**Mrs. Pauline Marois**

**Mrs. Marois:** Thank you. Messrs. Chairmen, colleagues, Commission members, each one of us will surely have the opportunity in the course of this debate to try to prove the soundness of his or her theory or viewpoint by using a figure, a statistic, a comparison. I for one will be stating my conviction that we need to progress, to move toward a clear and unambiguous choice that will allow the people of Québec to be fully and entirely sovereign over their own territory.

I am asserting this conviction right from the start, without partisanship, with a concern for honesty, and with respect for this Commission's members. Beyond what is commonly called the battle of statistics, I would like to outline, without being pretentious, of course, and taking into account the time I have been allotted, the major elements that characterize the modern economic Québec. I would like to say, I would like to demonstrate how this modern Québec can count on potential and deeply rooted values, the values of solidarity and cooperation, which are the essential base of a social project, of a large-scale economic and political project.

The Québec of 1990 is one whose economy is 60 % in the hands of Quebecers, whether French or English speaking, of old stock or new. The Québec of 1990 is also an immense territory, a territory of resources; our wealth of forests, minerals and hydro-electricity naturally comes to

mind. The Québec of 1990 now has a solid industrial base, be it in transport, communications, aeronautics, pulp and paper or aluminum, and the list goes on. Furthermore, the studies conducted by Merrill Lynch, the Bank of Montréal and the Toronto-Dominion Bank that were cited by my colleague only confirmed what was already apparent. Québec has a dynamic, rich, diversified, promising and viable economy, as much abroad as in the Canadian federation, it is said.

Let us now talk about the most important resource upon which Québec can rely: the men and women who inhabit this territory. The advances made in training in the past three decades alone represent a giant leap in our history. In 30 years, we have begun to catch up in all sectors of our collective life; these include science, technology, social sciences and of course management. We count on business people who are trained, innovative, creative and open to the world. The realm of the small and medium-sized business in Québec has succeeded in generating large businesses, in the services and engineering sectors and in production and distribution.

Allow me to talk a little about this realm of the small and medium-sized business. It actually represents more than 40 % of employment in Québec. Do these businesses really have the means to allow expensive duplication in programs of assistance, restructuring, training and modernization, and the tax and credit programs generated by two levels of government? Can these businesses afford the costs of energy uselessly spent on the dialogues of the deaf, where the needs of some do not correspond to the needs of others and where an attempt is made to impose a uniform vision and means of intervention dictated by central Canada, from Toronto to be exact, and which are not in keeping with our needs or industrial structures? Have business people not had enough of this vacillation, of these debates which, in the end, do not produce any results and, most importantly, which create hidden and underestimated costs for the majority of businesses?

People often bring up the argument of economic insecurity to dismiss the project for sovereignty. But, objectively, have we not been in an unprecedented state of insecurity for nearly 10 years, since we did not sign the 1982 Constitution and since the Meech Lake Accord was rejected by English Canada, which, by the way, never stops denying us the right to be different? We neither participate in the Constitution nor do we have a project of our very own. Is such a situation not more fear-provoking, in fact, than a clear and unequivocal choice? Thus, if there is a modern Québec, it might be interesting, without resorting to any wishful thinking, to examine what Québec could be tomorrow, based on a very recent past.

What kind of partnership could we hope for

in a sovereign Québec? Did we need to rely on encouragement, grants, credits or other forms of assistance forthcoming from Ottawa when collectively, in the darkest moments of an economic crisis, we came up with a project like *Corvée-Habitation*? This project was so rooted in our past that the term "corvée" was borrowed from our ancestors, for whom it was a spontaneous practice. For the essentials, did we need to turn to the government to collaborate as partners in a forum on employment? Do we know of any initiative as innovative as the FTQ's *Fonds de solidarité*? Earlier in our history, did Alphonse Desjardins wait for Ottawa, or any other place, to take him by the hand in building one of Québec's finest jewels? Are these unprecedented experiments in social and economic solidarity not a positive omen for the future?

Is there still reason for us to be afraid, to believe that safety comes from somewhere in Ottawa, from an almost bankrupt government? We are confident, proud. We know our resources, our tools, our techniques; it is we who have built them. Why not bank on these very solid realities and proceed with a project commensurate with our culture, our ambitions, our capacity for social solidarity?

In this morning's and this afternoon's sittings, there was reference to Jean Lesage's "masters in our own house". But, when I think of pride, I think of that magnificent heritage bequeathed to us by René Lévesque. Sovereignty is the possibility for our government to adjust taxation, to enact laws, and to sign treaties allowing us to etch out a Québec undauntedly turned toward the world, a Québec equipped with a wide variety of means that allow it to meet the specific needs of its businesses, its workers and, whatever has to do with the needs of the work force, its capitalization needs, or the tools for carrying out research and development, in short, a Québec that can take on the dimensions that are essential to the success of our businesses on markets which are becoming integrated and global, a Québec that aims for the active participation of workers in quality employment, a Québec that, why not, steers toward full employment.

To conclude, I would hope that together, with the people we will hear today, we will seek to define in what way we are and will continue to be winners, to be confident in ourselves, to believe in ourselves. Is this not the normal course for a people? Is this challenge not a more stimulating, invigorating one than turning back to the past and figuring out the cost of dependence, penny for penny? Following the example of many others, could we not think that the Québec people will be greater, with their glories and miseries, with their willingness to embark on projects, to build, with their strengths and weaknesses, and most importantly



with the possibility that they will finally decide, on the same grounds and with the same limitations as other sovereign nations, the possibility that they will decide for themselves what seems most suitable for them. You can be assured that it is to this end that I will work, Messrs. Chairmen, and that in this regard you can count on my cooperation. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mrs. Marois. Mr. Roger Nicolet now has the floor.

**Mr. Roger Nicolet**

**Mr. Nicolet (Roger):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Without making suppositions about what our fellow citizens will say, or about the problem which our mandate is addressing, or, above all, making the question of the future of a people, of a country, a matter of partisan polarization, which is an absurdity, I would like to make a few remarks which I hope will contribute to our collective reflection.

One initial observation must be made. The context in which we have come together is exceptional. In the past few months, we have been witness to the dismantling of a political and social system which for two generations had presided over the world's destinies, to the rise of vast movements of national affirmation to which it has been impossible to remain insensitive, or even indifferent, and, with this as a backdrop, to the recent events of Canadian history. Can we conceive of two more diametric situations than those which, night after night, appeared on the screens in our homes: the rebirth of Eastern Europe, in electrifying images, and the slow agony of a social project pitifully unfolding in Canada, the final stage of a concept around which more than half of Quebecers had mobilized for over a decade? We must admit it; the vision of Canada centred on the two founding peoples and orchestrated by Pierre Elliott Trudeau was dying a slow death.

From the first rejection of institutional bilingualism in Canada by various Ontario municipalities to the last harangue by the premiers of Manitoba and Newfoundland, at the end of June, we were spared no blows, almost as if the solemnity of the proceedings was meant to guarantee an impeccably clear message. Is it therefore any wonder that these images are so indelibly etched on our minds? You do not have to be a great scholar or psychologist to recognize the extent to which individual perceptions have changed in all areas of public opinion in Québec.

Thus, today, there is a sizeable consensus on the need to reopen the federative pact. Everyone wants to renegotiate. Opinions on the prerequisites, the subject matter, the extent, and especially the timetable of such negotiations vary

a great deal. But, sooner or later, whatever the constitutional opinion, there must be negotiation with Canada outside Québec. Thus, an initial survey should necessarily include an examination of the mood that prevails in the rest of Canada, even though we are aware that our mandate does not include a restructuring of Canada. This would obviously not entail a detailed assessment, families in Western Canada who continue sending their children to French immersion courses year after year, people burning the Québec flag, the examples are many and the multicultural mosaic, so to speak, complex.

On the other hand, whatever its worth, it is important to take into account the widespread current of opinion that is shaping politics, both federal and provincial, outside Québec, for a population comprised of nearly 18 % men and women born outside Canada. If, by extrapolation, we were to add their children, the cultures of more than one-third of Canadians, apart from Quebecers, are rooted in places across the Atlantic or the Pacific. These Canadians do not know what to make of two founding peoples, of a bicultural Canadian reality, of the demands being made by Québec. Is it therefore any wonder that any form of constitutional debate inspires, at best, an infinite lassitude and, at worst, rejection of the Québec fact.

Parallel to this first political observation, following the example of Claude Morin, we must observe that the main trends in constitutional thought outside Québec can lead only to a declared, or latent, refusal of any request for a review of the Constitution. Moreover, Canadian political history provides ample evidence of this. Very recent examples include the Liberal Party conference in Calgary, Clyde Wells' comments while on tour, and let us not forget Jean Chrétien in Montréal in late October; Canada outside Québec has quietly fallen back into soothing rhetoric on the state of the nation. The creation of the Spicer Forum does not modify this observation in any way. This initiative, and Spicer's remarks, must surely be associated with some sort of collective therapy, by a method inspired by Coué, transposed to the entire society, as much to exorcise its constitutional demons as to discreetly give credence to the status quo once again. Excessive haste and, too often, simplistic reactions unfortunately reflect an ignorance of the opinion in Québec and, more fundamentally, an unwillingness to go beyond a self-centred view of national priorities to the benefit of a renewed federal State.

Whether by inertia or calculation, outside Québec, Canada currently favours a collective movement which is following a path parallel to our own. This parallelism does not, because of the laws of geometry, allow us to envisage a coming together under present conditions. Saying that Canada is suffering from a malaise is no

longer simple speculation, but a diagnosis the observer cannot escape. All those outside Québec who insist on questioning this, need only consider the current state of federal institutions. An obvious example of this is the collapse of Canadian public finances. How can it be explained, other than by the federation's inability to acquire a strong government, rooted in a national determination which, in time of crisis, rises above government by expediency and laissez-faire.  
(8:00 p.m.)

In light of this observation, and putting aside any essentially Québec demands, all who are preoccupied with the situation can conclude only that an in-depth review, that is, a reshaping of the Canadian federation, is urgently required. If this conclusion coincides with the way I assume the majority of Quebecers see the situation, we should be all the more pleased. No matter how indifferent the electors outside Québec, or how great the forces dedicated to preserving the status quo, a reality born of the very nature of the country's current state is a point of access to be exploited in the course of the negotiations being planned by Quebecers.

Still, this manoeuvring device needs a trigger, or a detonator, which I see as implicit in the movement toward denunciation or a reopening of the federative pact, on condition that Québec's discourse is redirected. Under the present circumstances, there is a growing tendency to label people in Québec by the institutional models they advocate. This stretches from the main political parties to individuals who are called separatists, "sovereignists", nationalists, revisionists or federalists, with a muddling of all the nuances. With the media leading the pack, anything goes. Must we recall the somewhat ridiculous speculation that took place in certain quarters, on the precise titles, most often associated with the two main political parties, that Commission members would be given? All this utter futility. In fact, I say to you, Mr. Chairman, affirming the need and willingness to undertake a recasting, even a simple review, of the Constitution provides an answer in itself. The review of the constitutional framework, that is, of Canada-Québec relations is essentially a dynamic procedure. Affirming this and wanting to carry it out, then actually getting started means, if only implicitly, that the demands of this action will provide it with the impetus peculiar to it.

Even if, strengthened by the advice we receive in collective deliberations on the matter, we manage to come up with a well articulated concept of the status of Québec in relation to Canada, we cannot neglect to fully explore other scenarios, to gain a perfect understanding of the ins and outs of these scenarios and to fully calculate their effects.

It must be proclaimed loud and clear. The

reopening of constitutional arrangements by Québec is, by the problem's very nature, associated with a degree of uncertainty about the proceedings and outcome of such a process. Our fellow citizens must be aware of this. For its part, Canada outside Québec must fully understand that from now on all of Québec's positions will be taken with full acceptance of the hazards entailed in reopening the Constitution. In practical terms, owing to the institutional or strategic apathy in Canada which I referred to earlier, can we really get moving on possible negotiations, without a credible alternative, whether by advocating independence or rather developing new networks, or by taking on new partners? Should we not stop deluding ourselves with the claim that, without such strategic planning, we will wind up, quite gently, after additional never-ending rounds of negotiation among 11 parties, finding the winning combination for everyone, and actually squaring the circle? It is a question of making our fellow citizens clearly understand that the operation we are beginning must be conducted at several levels.

First, among Quebecers, it is our duty to set out the components of our common ground, and to decide what our collective values, aspirations and social, cultural and — let us not forget — economic visions must be.

Another project, one which is extensive and generous, but more complicated than it appears at first glance, owing to the ethnic and linguistic diversities of the peoples of this region, to its varied geography and regional and territorial history and to parameters governing its economy.

Second, we should assess the situation with regard to Canada. The elements involved in this type of appraisal are well known. The points of discord, overlapping of jurisdiction and obstacles to the full development of the society, culture and economy of Québec have been identified and will surely be discussed in the course of the Commission's hearings. It is our job to suggest the necessary, if not essential, reforms. However, one danger must be avoided at all cost: a concept of the relations between Québec and Canada does not constitute a project for the people of Québec. Listening to our proponents of nationalism, we too often come to think that new constitutional arrangements or the severing of these ties is a clear-cut objective. This is not the case at all. Constitutional negotiations are a necessary evil in attaining collective goals.

It is the third dimension of our project which ensures the synthesis of the first two. The method, the steps taken to meet the collective goals we have set, must be at the heart of our deliberations. I am totally convinced, Mr. President, that it is our responsibility to make both our fellow Quebecers and fellow Canadians understand that Québec has outlined a vision and

a plan for the protection of its future as a community, that it has forged the tools it will need to work toward them and, more specifically, that, should one direction obstinately remain blocked, other solutions, which have been examined and assessed, will be available to Quebecers.

Throughout this first discussion, I have deliberately abstained from directly getting into a comparison of the fiscal and economic benefits, although it is inseparable from the comparative assessment of various scenarios for the reopening and recasting of the Constitution. It is my impression that the statistics normally used in this type of analysis have been so debased that simply qualifying or quantifying them, in any manner, brings automatic opposition from everyone who seems to dislike the conclusions. The counter-analysis, which inevitably ensues, never fails to change the parameters or terms of reference and arrives at conclusions which seemingly disprove the initial premise. A succession of such exercises has, for our fellow citizens, removed all meaning from these statistics. As much as I would like to hope that the Commission, in its sessions, will succeed in coherently presenting a credible economic and financial case, I am apprehensive of the after-effects of such a process. I would like to go further in my analysis at this table, and I hope that you will give us the chance to do so.

To conclude, I would like to express a wish. Over the past few weeks, the media debate on the Commission has tended to fall into the usual rut of discussions on Québec-Canada relations. Public positions of the political parties on the constitutional issue are again causing such concern, mainly electoral and hinged on the expectations of their traditional followers, that the necessity to refer to a coded vocabulary, shock slogans, explosive images and, especially, to once again take clear-cut positions against those of the adversary seems to be much more of a political marketing strategy than an assessment of the planning needs of constitutional negotiations. The expectations the Commission has raised in all areas of public opinion in Québec force us to abandon such designs. Our fellow citizens will never forgive us for deviating into a partisan dialectic which hides the essentials of a rerouting of our society. We have taken on a unique responsibility, Mr. Chairman. I like to think we will be able to demonstrate that we are worthy of it. It is in the interest of Quebecers. History will be witness to the heights to which we manage to raise this cause which exceptional circumstances have forced us to serve. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Nicolet. An engineer does not have to be reminded that the chair does not know how to count; however, since many of your colleagues

have taken less than their allotted time, this will not create problems in the timetable. We will now go on to Mr. André Ouellet.

#### Mr. André Ouellet

**Mr. Ouellet (André):** Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada and its Leader, Mr. Jean Chrétien, whom I am representing on this Commission, I should first like to congratulate the Co-Chairmen for agreeing to serve the people of Québec and to assure you of my full cooperation.

Because of the special circumstances of its creation and its role, the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec is extremely important. It is, of course, quite an honour for me to be one of its members; it is also a privilege to be able to take advantage of this exceptional forum to address all the people of Québec and even of Canada. But it is also a duty for me to listen, and to examine objectively and impartially the various positions presented by the witnesses who will appear before this Commission in the coming weeks. We must determine whether Quebecers would be better served by a single government than it is now by two, one provincial and one Canadian. In other words, can a sovereign Québec government alone fully satisfy all Quebecers' aspirations or must it, to serve its people better, yield part of its sovereignty to one or more other levels of government?

The answers to these questions constitute a political debate that has gone on for a long time in our country. Throughout our history, distinguished Quebecers have asked these questions but their answers have unfortunately never satisfied the advocates of outright independence for Québec. At a time when Quebecers, sensing a decline in Canadian enthusiasm, wish to rush things along in Québec and make us choose quickly, without sufficient forethought, it would be wise to use this Commission to place things in perspective and examine them in a truly historical context. I shall be very honest. I distrust those who claim it is now or never and want an immediate referendum because it seems that federalism is no longer profitable, or who think it has been proven that English Canada has once and for all rejected Québec, simply because the Prime Minister did not succeed in gaining approval of his constitutional proposal. All of them oversimplify the issues in line with their thesis. I find it unacceptable to push people into hasty, radical decisions, while strong feelings are still aroused. I am one of those who think that, in matters of State, reason should take precedence over passion.

And before making radical changes in our form of government, I should like to remind you of what was said long ago by those in Québec

who had political responsibilities when the Canadian federation was being planned. As I reread their words, I am struck by just how pertinent they are even 125 years later. In 1856, Étienne Parent stated, "If the reasonable people in our colonies do not agree on a plan for confederation, the hotheads will soon drag us willy nilly into the maelstrom of the American union". In 1858, Joseph Taché wrote in *Le Courrier du Canada*, "How easy things would be for a confederation of the provinces but are impossible for the same provinces acting alone". In December 1864, Hector Langevin said, "Our future as a people, the fate of the French race in America, depends on our choice". And in January 1865, he added, "Confederation is a new era for the development of our people and our resources. It lies open for the expansion of our race and our religious and civil institutions, for our nationality, offering a haven where they can grow in safety".

On February 7, 1865, George-Étienne Cartier stated, "The question we must ask ourselves is this. Do we wish to remain separate? Do we wish to preserve an isolated, purely provincial existence when, united, we could become a great nation?" No union of small nations has ever been able to hope to achieve national greatness so easily. And, on February 14, 1865, Narcisse Belleau declared quite prophetically, "The influence of Lower Canada will make or break governments as it will, when its interests are at stake or its feathers are ruffled".  
(8:15 p.m.)

Former Québec Prime Minister Joseph Alfred Mousseau affirmed, "The Confederation that governs us offers the broadest possible protection for our laws, religion, language and material interests".

Thus our political leaders at the end of the 19th century made a political choice to reject assimilation, and this became the foundation of the later union of the provinces within Confederation. They were convinced that in the long term the survival of the French Canadian language and culture would not be better assured in an economically weaker and more isolated Québec. This idea seemed a sure bet for over a century.

Today, some people are calling this way of thinking into question; that is their right. This Commission will give them an opportunity to prove the contrary. I am here to listen to them. I have an open enough mind to be ready to be convinced of the soundness of their views, but I wish to warn them frankly that, like Parent, Taché, Langevin, Cartier, Belleau and Mousseau, I have a bias in favour of federalism.

Throughout the world, federalism is the rule rather than the exception. It is the form of government enjoyed by over half of humankind. It is common primarily in countries that have a

vast territory and a number of ethnic and linguistic communities. It is found, in particular, in former English colonies such as India, Australia and Canada, and in all those young, modern countries like the United States and Brazil, as well as post-war Germany.

In a federal system, as you know, power is divided between two orders of government, each sovereign in its own jurisdictional sphere, and each possessing executive, legislative and judicial powers. It follows that, of all forms of government, it offers the best protection for individual freedoms. In a unitary system, people are subject to absolute centralization. A single government holds all the powers. I am not guilty of any deception in reminding Quebecers that unitary systems have often engendered the worst abuses and the longest lived dictatorships.

In federal regimes, on the other hand, there is a healthy rivalry between orders of government, to the benefit of the people. In my opinion, federalism is the finest form of government but, as I mentioned, I have no objection to our asking whether this form of government best serves the interests of Quebecers today. We must of course emphasize that there have been several kinds of federations. For example, the federated states of Canada, commonly known as the provinces, have more political powers than their American counterparts. Should the Québec government have even greater political power? I do not rule out this possibility. I am convinced that federalism is sufficiently flexible to allow for still further adjustment.

Must we entirely abandon the federal system to fully satisfy Quebecers? Before letting some speakers reply in the affirmative, I wish to remind them that, at present, whether they realize it or not, the country Quebecers belong to, Canada, is one of the freest in the world. Canadians enjoy religious freedom, political freedom, civil liberties, individual liberties, freedom of expression, of association, of peaceful assembly, etc. They also have even greater social security than Americans. Let us not forget that Canada's poor are rich when compared with those in the United States, and millionaires compared with the poor in Africa and Asia.

Among the 170 countries of the world, Canada stands in first place in terms of the level of well-being; I repeat, in first place. This emerges from a document entitled *L'état du monde*, the 1989-1990 edition of the world economic and geopolitical almanac. Our life expectancy, education and health services, per capita income, and housing all combine to make us the richest people in the world from the standpoint of well-being. I do not pretend that everything is perfect in Canadian federalism, but improvements are needed wherever you are. We must, however, consider things honestly. Apart from certain frustrations, we must admit that

there have been and still are great advantages to being part of Canada. I myself firmly believe that despite the difficulties and problems we have encountered, the great principles of Canadian federalism are worth pursuing, reforming, improving; they should not be abandoned.

In conclusion, I wish to quote something Mr. Chrétien said recently. "At a time when Québec has fully entered the modern era, when it has committed itself to crossing the frontiers of foreign markets, when more than ever Quebecers are opening the doors of international institutions and appearing on the stages of the whole world, why would they refuse to take part in controlling Canada's destiny, which lies within their grasp?" My reply, ladies and gentlemen, is that such a refusal would be absurd. Quebecers are too intelligent, too enterprising to give up such a large part of their heritage. I am convinced that the Québec dream is splendidly compatible with the reality of Canada.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Ouellet, I wish to inform you that you have also spoken for almost 15 minutes. Mr. Poissant.

**Mr. Claude-Albert Poissant**

**Mr. Poissant:** Mr. Chairman, since I do not have a prepared speech, I shall be speaking only from notes I wrote at dinnertime this evening.

My role is clear; I am a representative of the business world. And what the business world says – and I find this is essential – is that the economy is the driving force behind all activities. I am proud to see our Prime Minister, Mr. Bourassa, and Mr. Parizeau have indicated clearly that this is an essential commodity for a strong economy, a strong province, and I think I am in full agreement. Even our two Chairmen have agreed. I wish to state that this does not mean business people talk only in terms of dollars; they do not disregard or underestimate other spheres of activity. On the contrary, I think their presence is necessary if we wish a culture to thrive in a province or a country. I believe the economic aspect is indispensable. I am now responsible for a company and I see the essential role of a single-industry town. We first have an important, exclusively economic, activity; then comes assistance for the arts and culture, for small and medium-sized businesses, which we heard about a while back and which are very good taxpayers for municipalities and school boards. In the final analysis, what happens? We are present in the world of culture and the arts. I almost forgot a basic point: good workers and employees for our dear unions. This is important.

Finally, everyone gains from having a strong, viable industry. What do business people look at first? I have three lines here to tell you, Mr. Chairman, that our primary concern is to

operate in a political and economic climate where we can earn maximum returns. I must have the necessary tools, economic tools to operate in normal, and above all competitive conditions. Perhaps questions have been asked about my appointment. Who is Poissant? Well, I'm going to tell you that my industry, Québec's pulp and paper industry, provides jobs for 85 000 workers and ships \$ 8 000 000 000 in exports. This means that when we look at Québec's exports, our industry exports as much as all others combined, including Hydro-Québec. So I think our representation is very important. It is also a highly unionized field, with all its paraeconomic spinoffs in education, health and so on. I feel we fulfil our role very well indeed. True, we have problems and the media do not fail to point them out. There is constant talk of the environment, but we will return to that another time.

Now, our market was until recently a north-south market; when we spoke of Québec's pulp and paper exports, we were referring mainly to the south. This market may soon be changing because of environmental concerns. There are problems with waste disposal sites in the United States and our neighbours wish to send the ball back to our court in Canada and especially in Québec. They say we should recycle. Then we have a problem on an international scale. I have to shift my market from north-south to west-east, that is towards Europe, and there I must meet other conditions, other requirements that are critical for the pulp and paper industry, import quotas. I must be sure that people will listen to me when I go, that I am sufficiently adult, when among the grownups, to be able to negotiate import quotas with those countries. Obviously, exchange rates, interest rates, discount rates have a major impact on our industry. But I for one have asked myself: How can I make money, show a profit, if I have to depend on the exchange rate? This is a serious problem for me. Why should I not be able, if my dollar were theoretically at par, to compete with an American in the pulp and paper industry, when I am close to natural resources, and I have more economical sources of energy than my neighbour? Why do I need a favourable exchange rate? We have to ask questions of this nature and I have no answers for the moment.

Finally, I raise the issue, Mr. Chairman. I have read a fair number of the briefs. Many of them urge us to adopt a policy. What is lacking – and this may be a professional bias on my part – are balance sheets. I like to see how we are going to do something. What will happen after we do it? Do not forget that I am in the biggest industry of Québec, the pulp and paper industry, with exports totalling \$ 8 000 000 000. We Quebecers cannot neglect this aspect of things. So I must ask myself and I will ask others who come to these hearings about these

issues. The briefs are rather vague on the matter. How are we going to negotiate? We cannot negotiate afterwards. They talk about this for 20 pages, saying we will negotiate once we have determined our approach, charted our course, but they do not state precisely how. I will find it hard to negotiate at first but later I will find it easier, at least I hope so. I have no doubt about our being able to do so. There are fine negotiators among us. History has not told us that everything was perfect.

What about the division, the evaluation of assets, of debts, of contingent debts we may have to assume, the common market? As we know, some provinces have not been in favour of a common market. Québec strongly supported free trade and yet we are told that if one federal political party were to be elected, it would simply tear up the agreement. We have a long way to go. And finally, this evening an idea came to mind. I have watched how one of my friends and favourite clients began in a very small way, 25 or 30 years ago, and how he has been able to expand, first provincially, in neighbouring provinces, and then in the United States. Today he is doing business to the tune of \$ 2 000 000 000 or \$3 000 000 000.

Here I must agree with you, Mr. Ouellet. I do not always agree with you, but the remark you made — it's true we say at the end, "(en français)". Do you realize, if we had not had that training of the past 30 or 40 years, what Québec would be like today? We have now changed direction. We began 25, 50 years ago to say it was not a sin to make money. Just think! And then we said, "That's good, things are going well". And we expanded. Fortunately, as you said just now. And if we continue to expand, give us another 10 or 15 years. I believe Quebecers have the might, the energy and the ability. And the advantage is that many times when one is sitting on a gold mine, like certain wealthy provinces, one may see the train go by and then it will be too late. This is my parting thought, Mr. Chairman. You can be sure I'll be listening. I want to know exactly how things will be done. And I will make my decision according to the enlightenment I have received. Please understand you have my full cooperation. Thank you. (8:30 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Poissant. Mr. Jacques Proulx now has the floor.

**Mr. Jacques Proulx**

**Mr. Proulx (Jacques):** Thank you Mr. Chairman. Ladies and gentlemen, this extraordinary Commission, which has a mandate to enlighten our fellow Quebecers on their foreseeable future, may be a historic moment for Québec. It may tell our people, for we obviously form a people, quite frankly what the collective

and individual issues are that chart the development of nations. And of course we are also a nation. A people, a nation — everything starts from there and should end there — if, since we are here and whatever our regular concerns, we wish to be worthy of the trust of our compatriots. This people, our people, has rights and obligations. This nation, our nation, has a history and legitimate aspirations. Whether or not we agree with the political views to be presented to us in the coming weeks, I find it essential, paramount and, I insist, absolutely vital, that none of us consider the special interests of the groups or persons we usually represent before the general interest of Québec. Otherwise, this Commission will be a waste of time.

I cannot and do not wish to believe that it was decided to adopt the exceptional procedure of including representatives of various milieus, as well as parliamentarians, only for show. On the contrary, I should like to believe that the times and the issues are so critical that our lawmakers have decided to use judgment, rather than tactics. Furthermore, our presence here forces all of us to neglect our own organizations and families. Québec in its entirety, Canada almost as much, and to some extent the world will be watching and passing judgment. They will be justified in doing so, and with some severity, for there is one thing we must not do, and that is to play games with the future of Québec and its people.

As for me, aware of the noble charge I have undertaken, I wish to clarify the spirit in which I approach my work. It is obvious, it seems to me, that we are here because the federal system, past and present, has brought us to this point. More than a century of ties with the rest of Canada under the British North America Act, and another century before that, depending on the goodwill of those who have won all the battles since the era of New France. Then, more recently, the fact that we have twice been rejected by the rest of Canada, in 1981 and 1990, means I can no longer in all conscience endorse our constitutional status, federalism as it is. I am convinced I am in tune with the vast majority of Quebecers in taking this view. The vast expanse of the future lies open before us, where we must chart our course, with no more and no fewer obstacles than any other free people on our planet. If some people wish to prevent this Commission from examining all possible scenarios, the public will pass judgment on their ploys, but I will not lend myself to such schemes.

In our context, and as a member of this Commission, I am basically reticent about labels and suspicious of words used to describe the constitutional reality without being properly defined. Moreover, I do not think our Commission should in any way tie its

recommendations to the strategic aspects which will inevitably affect any process of negotiating with Canada. In other words, it is what seems good for Québec that should be our guide, for here we do not represent the rest of Canada, but the people of Québec. This is essential for our role to be really clear. Fear of the future is not conducive to success; and so I am not afraid of any analysis, any point of view, and I know I am neither more nor less intelligent than my compatriots generally. And it is because I am convinced that my fellow Quebecers are mature, dynamic and adult that I am no less certain that they expect at least as much discernment, to say nothing of courage, from us. Therefore I am proud, Mr. Chairman, to have undertaken this responsibility, in the name of the higher interest of this nation that can and must deliberately take its future in hand. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Proulx. Mr. Serge Turgeon.

**Mr. Serge Turgeon**

**Mr. Turgeon:** Mr. Chairman, when I came here this morning and saw all this snow falling, with the wind whipping around, I thought that in the end it should not be too difficult for this Commission to come to a consensus that our country is not just a country, but winter itself ("mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver").

Jesting aside, the cultural community was determined to be represented on this Commission because it was aware, more than any other sector perhaps, that had it not been for culture and all it implies, we would not be here today, and there would be no discussion about the political and constitutional future of Québec. All day we have heard commissioners, from every walk of life, talk about economic stability, the importance of the economic dimension, the importance of economic association. Well, we have no problem with that. But I would like to remind you this evening very simply that the future of Québec will in any event be created from what we are and what we have been. And culture, including the arts, like communications, science and research, to mention only a few of the fields vital to the life of a people, is a record that encompasses our origins and our aspirations. Each and every one of us should be able to find his place within it. Culture is everything we are and all we would like to be. It is a way of life, a way of being that is ours. It is also our way of speaking, understanding and passing judgment.

Basically, the question we are asking together, starting from today, in an amazingly democratic manner, with all the occasional hitches democracy may entail, is where quality of life begins. For that is what is at stake, a

quality of social life, of economic life, of cultural life. Well, let me tell you that quality of life begins with the life force of a people, that is, where there is a people, where the depths of reality are plumbed, where once and for all we can build our home, rest and fulfil our dreams. And I hope that speaking about the future of a people will never, but never, again be considered a foolish partisan issue.

That is the point of the debate, ladies and gentlemen, and I hope we can carry it on with the respect and pride called for by the inspiration of this people. We are not here to tear ourselves apart, we are here, first of all, to listen. If any of you have ever had anything to do with the theatre, you will know that this is the first quality of a good actor, knowing how to listen. I speak of an actor as I could of any man or woman who has at heart the desire to be there for others. For culture – and I may surprise some of you – is a little bit like business; you see it is carried on by a group. It is an act of the people, of course, but is also an act of the majority. This is why the world of culture insisted on having its seat on this Commission, not only to provide answers, its own, but also perhaps and above all, to take part in the questioning of people and things. Our convictions do not mean that we have closed our minds, but we must recognize that it is culture, in the end, that requires us to cultivate on a large scale. It is culture that will make us broaden our horizons during this work to include every element of our nation and not just the precious few.

Of course, it is unfortunate that at a time when we must make choices, when every component of a society should tend towards a new, greater or finer humanity, it is unfortunate, indeed a bitter pill, to find that for many, culture still means only entertainment, amusement or recreation. No, culture is not an affair of an elite, or of privilege. Culture is for everyone, it is for each one of us. This is why I think it is important to understand that starting today, from now on, we must agree there is no more room for go-betweens, for those who prevent us from understanding and being productive.

So we must unceasingly ask questions. It is the only way to learn and understand. We may also, I'm afraid, have to challenge or interpret the silences. And in that case, we will have wasted time and energy, if some of our economic, social and cultural elite remain silent. The time for equivocation should be over and done with.

At a time when we must design our home as we want it, wide open to the world, to everyone, but where we are in control, we must first close ranks with our fellow citizens, because we are alike, from the same line, from the same race. We have sprung together from

the same roots. Then and only then can we, without unnecessary risk, open up even more freely to the rest of Canada, to America. We shall be able to open up, without closing ourselves off from what we are. Here is where the real debate lies at this time. We must understand that all our cultural and collective issues are intimately related, that the first thing to do to conquer the world is in fact to occupy our space, our cultural space as well as our economic space, our social space, and that our achievements in these fields are very fragile and offer no assurance for the future.

This is why in my view it is important not to allow ourselves to be ensnared and to stop reversing the roles. We must learn to behave like a majority, with all due consideration for minorities who dwell in our midst, but who respect us. Whether these minorities speak English or another language, they should live with us in circumstances where the rules of the game are clear, known and respected by all. Then – and this is their best guarantee – we will always be respectful of their differences. For we must not forget that what characterizes Québec in the eyes of the world, and what should be recognized by the minorities that have made it their home, is the French language spoken by 83 % of its people.

This should be sufficient for us to decide ourselves, for our future is first of all our business, and ours alone, to launch our immense endeavour in national pride. At any rate, that is what is proposed by all those who in the name of Québec have long heralded the country in writing, painting, speech, song, sculpture and dance. Thank you.

(8:45 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Turgeon. And to wind up our day, Mr. Russell Williams has the floor.

**Mr. Russell Williams**

**Mr. Williams (Russell):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You have allowed me the last word for this evening and I hope you will give me the same privilege on March 28, 1991.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** One day at a time, Mr. Williams.

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

**Mr. Williams:** No, no, I'll accept the next time too. The opening day of the public hearings on the political and constitutional future of Québec is an important one for Québec and for the history of Canada. Many opinions have been expressed and a variety of views presented. Speakers have talked about compassion, emotion

and commitment to building an even stronger, more vital Québec. I wish to congratulate all the commissioners who have spoken, and I feel honoured to be among you. However, it seems to me that a number of very serious discussions lie before us. I should like to stress the open-mindedness my colleagues have shown. I firmly believe that through mutual respect and dialogue we will be able to achieve, as we have in the Liberal Party, a perspective that includes all Quebecers. The Liberal Party has always shown leadership in the economic field. It is of paramount importance to maintain this orientation in all discussions on our future, for a solid economy is the cornerstone of any society.

Puisque nous regardons vers l'avenir, la Commission doit veiller à ce que tout ce qui fait le Québec et tout ce qui nous définit comme société distincte, soit inclus dans chaque aspect de notre gouvernement, de nos lois et de notre vie quotidienne. Peu importe notre façon de nous définir comme Québécois, que ce soit comme francophones, comme anglophones ou comme allophones, jeunes ou vieux, Québécois de naissance ou par choix, nous devons maintenir nos cœurs et nos esprits ouverts.

Mr. Chairman, every one of us can contribute a different point of view and experience of life. I should like to share some of my concerns with you. First, the community to which I belong, the West Island, is one of the most bilingual areas in Québec and in Canada. It is a community where French and English-speaking Quebecers have learned to live in mutual respect and harmony. It is a community which knows and appreciates the richness and pleasure of living in two languages. We accept the pre-eminence of French and benefit from the experience of the English-speaking community as friend and neighbour. We wish to protect and preserve this unique character for the future. Many of the people in the West Island are Quebecers by choice. Our growing pluralism adds another dimension to Québec society. We have family ties throughout Canada and the entire world and we are stronger because of this experience. We are Quebecers and we are Canadians. Nous sommes Québécois et Québécoises, Canadiens et Canadiennes. Our community wants to embrace the future if we can find the mechanisms to protect and promote the cultural identity of Québec, ensure economic stability and growth, and enhance fundamental rights and freedoms.

Notre communauté accueillera l'avenir avec joie si nous arrivons à trouver les moyens nécessaires pour protéger ainsi que promouvoir l'identité culturelle du Québec, assurer la stabilité de même que la croissance économiques et faire valoir davantage les droits et libertés fondamentales.

The period we have just lived through has been extremely difficult from the constitutional



viewpoint. Our divisions and disagreements have been emphasized to the detriment of any possibility of bringing us closer together. At times, intolerance, impatience and the tendency not to take enough time to understand or be understood have obviously got the upper hand. I should like to share a few personal experiences with you. Following the events in Sault-Sainte-Marie, a small municipality in Ontario, we all expressed our frustrations in our own way. On the other hand, I have had an opportunity to meet the mayors of all the large and capital cities in Canada, each of them representing his or her own province or territory, and they voiced their commitment to Québec's aspirations. Which of these perspectives is really more important?

We felt a great sadness with the non-ratification of the Meech Lake Accord. Many tried to convince us that it was a rejection of Québec by all of Canada. It was for some, but my experience has been, as I met with parliamentarians from across Canada on two occasions this summer, that, although there may not be a very high level of understanding of the legitimate aspirations of the people of Québec, there is a real desire to build a country that incorporates those aspirations. I believe we should further examine this issue.

Mr. Chairman, nous avons été très attristés du fait que l'accord du lac Meech n'ait pas été ratifié. Beaucoup ont tenté de nous convaincre qu'il s'agissait d'un rejet du Québec par tout le Canada. Pourtant, si certains ont effectivement manifesté ainsi leur rejet, les rencontres que j'ai eues en deux occasions cet été avec des parlementaires de tout le Canada me donnent plutôt à penser que malgré la très grande incompréhension à laquelle se heurtent les aspirations légitimes des Québécois, il existe un désir réel de bâtir un pays qui incorpore ces aspirations. C'est, à mon sens, un aspect qui mérite considération.

Je suis Québécois par choix. Ma femme est Québécoise de naissance. Un de nos fils fait partie des 60 pour 100 d'élèves ayant choisi de participer au programme d'études en langue française de la Commission scolaire Lakeshore. Mon autre fils a toujours été inscrit au programme d'immersion en langue française. Les membres de ma famille sont de fiers Québécois d'expression anglaise, qui ne veulent pas s'isoler de leurs voisins d'expression française.

The manner in which we define ourselves as persons and as a society is undergoing many changes. There is no one English-only Canada outside Québec, and there is no one French-only Québec. The personal choices we make will form the bases of the society our children and grandchildren inherit. It is a weighty responsibility based on respect for others, and a practical commitment to protect all fundamental

rights and freedoms that have become the key values underlying our Québec society. I hope that our system of justice, education and social affairs will continue to respect the needs of all Quebecers and the specific needs of the linguistic and cultural minorities. We should perpetuate this basic commitment as we envisage the future.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I look on Québec and I look on Canada as a family, my family. Without hesitation, I state that, obviously, I want this family to stay intact, as it is as much a part of us as we are a part of it. However, equally, I am not interested in a family unless it is based on mutual respect and concern for all its individual members. There must be real respect and acceptance for the legitimate concerns of all our peoples. And, of course, every member is unique; special consideration must be given to each individual's needs.

Je dirai en conclusion, M. le Président, que je vois le Québec et le Canada comme une famille, la mienne. Je veux sans aucune réserve que cette famille reste unie, puisqu'elle fait partie de nous comme nous en faisons partie. De la même façon, je refuse d'appartenir à une famille d'où respect et acceptation mutuels seraient absents. Les préoccupations légitimes de toutes les populations doivent susciter plus de respect et d'acceptation réelle. Chaque membre est unique, bien entendu, et c'est pourquoi les besoins de chacun méritent une considération particulière.

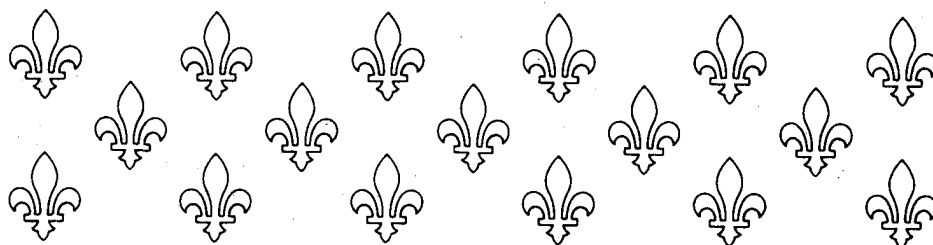
I wish to undertake this consultation process along these lines, with an open mind and close ties to the realities of my community. I hope these democratic exchanges will lead us to acceptable solutions that protect the greater interest of Québec for all its citizens. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Williams. Ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, at the end of our first day of public hearings, I wish to thank you for your discipline and the clarity and open-mindedness with which you have expressed your views.

I shall say no more, for it would take too long to summarize what has been said today.

I now declare the public session adjourned, but request that you remain for a few moments to prepare for tomorrow's hearing. Since the public sitting is now ended, nothing further will be recorded. Would all those who are not members of the Commission or its staff please leave the room.

(End of sitting at 8:57 p.m.)



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# ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

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PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

## Journal des débats



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

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

**Québec, Wednesday, November 7, 1990**

**No 2**

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Québec, Wednesday, November 7, 1990

## Hearings: Organizations

(11:07 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I declare this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. I'll repeat the mandate of the Commission, which is to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and to make recommendations thereon. Today's sitting will be devoted to hearing organizations or individuals that have submitted briefs to the Commission.

This morning we will hear the Chambre de commerce du Québec. Then we jump to 4:30, with the Fédération des ACEF du Québec; 7:30, with the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, and finally, 9:00, with the Conseil de la vie française en Amérique.

## Organization of the Proceedings

I will repeat certain rules to you. For an organization like the Chambre de commerce, for a sitting lasting one hour and thirty minutes, the speaking times for the members of the Commission are as follows: 10 minutes for the chair, 15 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the government, 15 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Opposition, 40 minutes for members registered with the chair - each of the members having a maximum of 10 minutes each - and, of course, 10 minutes for the presentation of the brief.

Before introducing the Chambre de commerce du Québec, as stipulated, I wish to point out that a number of the members of the Commission have requested the right to speak this morning. The Chambre de commerce seems to be a very interesting subject since, at the present time, we have 11 requests to speak from members other than government and Opposition representatives. Therefore, it is almost certain that all 11 members will not be able to be heard.

Here, with my colleagues Mr. Michel Bélanger and Mr. Rousseau, we have drawn up a list whose content we will share with you as the discussion proceeds.

Now, let me present Mr. Jean Lambert, of the Chambre de commerce du Québec, who has come here this morning to present his brief. We are very pleased to welcome you to the first hearing of the Commission. Would you be kind enough, Mr. Lambert, to introduce your colleagues.

## Hearings

## Chambre de commerce du Québec

**Mr. Lambert (Jean):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Allow me to introduce, to my left, the

first vice-president of the Chambre de commerce du Québec, Clément Joly; to my immediate right, Claude Descôteaux, the executive vice-president of the Chambre; and, to my far right, Yves Rabeau, an economist who has been a resource person on our committee.

Messrs. co-chairmen, Prime Minister, Leader of the Official Opposition, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, circumstances of which we are all aware will prevent us from being with the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec for long. So be it. Though brief, our stay will nevertheless be an exceptional one. Yes, exceptional, and not only because we are the first to appear, but mainly because of the unanimous message that we bring you from all business circles in Québec.

The Chambre de commerce du Québec represents here more than 60 000 business people who are members of our organization or its 230 local chambers. It is really their message that I have brought you. This message is the product of a highly democratic process which began last August with the formation of a committee composed of 30 well-known business people and academics from all regions of Québec. The process continued with the presentation of a preliminary document at our congress and concluded with a poll of all our regional and local chambers during the month of October.

The results of this process lead me to hope that you will reach the same level of consensus as we did. Over 95% of the respondents polled indicated that they totally or quite agreed with the 15 recommendations that we are presenting to this Commission. Those respondents represent 40 000 members, or two-thirds of our membership. Our corporate members were consulted as well and they replied along the same lines. Throughout Québec - from the Gaspésie to the West Island, from the Côte-Nord to the Outaouais - the business world shares a common position. Delegates from several of our chambers of commerce are here today and I would like to extend my greetings to them.

The position of the Chambre de commerce du Québec is essentially economic in nature, since that is our main area of expertise. While we categorically reject the status quo, we will not at this stage take a stand on the specific constitutional system that Québec should choose, in particular with regard to the ties to be maintained with the other Canadian provinces. However, we would like to have the opportunity to outline our political position at a later date.

From that perspective, we are submitting to you today 15 recommendations which revolve around 4 major issues: preserving economic stability, putting public finances back on the rails, tailoring the development policy to meet

the real needs of the economy, and lastly, restoring monetary stability. In our view, these 15 recommendations concern all of the factors that will be significant for our economic future.

Without getting into all the details, I would like to give you a brief summary of our recommendations. The first three are aimed at preserving our economic stability. In business, uncertainty is enemy number one. It is clear to us that the period of indecision surrounding the constitutional debate will have major repercussions on economic decisions. That is why we recommend maintaining the greatest continuity possible in the acts and regulations that currently govern the Québec economy domestically, in its relations with the rest of Canada and abroad. To this end, it is important to preserve the integrity of the Canadian common market, to guarantee existing economic freedoms, to maintain an attitude of openness towards Québec's Anglophones and citizens whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, and to respect current trade treaties and financial commitments.

At the same time, we want to see the question of Québec's constitutional future settled quickly and decisively. Less than a year after tearing down the Berlin wall, the Germans have redesigned their future. We are certainly capable of acting just as quickly. Speed has never been the enemy of progress. In this exercise, we will however have to take the time to judge the true worth of the various possible constitutional options, namely renewed federalism, the formation of a confederation, an economic community, or independence.

The second part of our brief, which deals with public finances, contains the largest share of our recommendations; seven of them relate to that subject. This is not the first time that the business community has denounced the scandalous imbalance in public finances and, in particular, the federal deficit. The solution, in our view, is to control the propensity of governments to spend and borrow. We therefore believe it essential that any new constitution should help to eliminate or minimize the overlapping, inconsistencies and duplications that have resulted in the squandering of public funds.

To that end, legislative jurisdictions will have to be clearly identified and differentiated. To be more specific, we believe that Québec should have total control over all fields of a local or regional nature. Should the federal framework be retained, we think it necessary that the provincial level be given exclusive jurisdiction in many fields which we enumerate in our brief: education, science, culture, justice, communications, labour, health, social affairs, to name only a few.

In this event, provision would also have to be made for an effective mechanism for sharing jurisdictions in fields not explicitly included in

the new constitution. When responsibilities are transferred from one level of government to another, expenditures, income taxes and regulations should be closely monitored to ensure that the new legislative and fiscal framework enhances the competitiveness of the Québec economy.

An important corollary of this clarification of jurisdictions is its effect on State financing. If there are no more shared jurisdictions, we will be able to put an end to the present system of federal-provincial transfers. Here we defend the principle of accountability: a single authority in each field responsible for both spending and taxing. The Chambre recommends that the present system of equalization payments be re-examined in depth. Our concern extends beyond the division of powers to the conditions governing the adoption of deficitary government budgets. In our opinion, any new constitution should strictly regulate governments' borrowing power so that the necessity of taxing in order to spend would entail greater budgetary accountability on the part of our elected representatives.

In the third part of our brief, we touch on the redefinition of powers to the benefit of the economy. What we are attacking here is the ineffectiveness of the economic development policy. This is a major source of dissatisfaction for our members with regard to the present federal regime. In addition to the taxation system and regulations, three factors have a determining influence on the performance of business firms: human resources, technology and financing. At the government level, there are three corresponding areas of jurisdiction: manpower, research and development, and financial institutions. We have taken a close look at each one. What we found was a jumble of ineffectiveness, incoherence and waste in manpower policies; federal practices in the area of research and development which are detrimental to Québec, and Ottawa's constant reining in of Québec's financial initiatives. We conclude that it is imperative that the areas of manpower, unemployment insurance, and research and development be placed under the exclusive jurisdiction of the government of Québec. Similarly, it should have broader jurisdiction in the field of immigration. That would enable Québec to adopt a coherent manpower strategy and a research and development assistance policy that would truly meet the needs of business.

As regards financial institutions, a field where Québec has established itself as the Canadian leader in deregulation, globalization and financial innovations, we advocate better defined jurisdictions that would trigger fewer disputes between the two governments. As regards...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I'm

sorry, Mr. Lambert, but you have one minute left. Perhaps I didn't mention the 10-minute limit at the beginning.

**Mr. Lambert:** All right. I was just coming to the last issue raised in our brief, which was to restore monetary stability.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I think the members will be willing to allow our first speaker a little leeway.

**Mr. Lambert:** Thank you. So, to restore monetary stability. The exorbitant level of interest rates and of the Canadian dollar is due to huge federal government deficits, but also to the interventions of the central bank. Our members are not calling the Canadian monetary union into question. They are, however, of the opinion that Québec's participation in that union should entail conditions to ensure that we will no longer have such sharp fluctuations in the Canada-U.S. exchange rate as in the past decade. In their view, a strong economy and sound public finances will foster confidence.

We are, however, questioning the structure and operation of the Bank of Canada and the role it plays in our democratic institutions. We recommend that the board of directors of the Bank of Canada be composed of voting members from the various regions of Canada, appointed by the federal government from lists of names proposed by the member states.

Finally, in our last recommendation, we advocate using "natural remedies" to fight inflation. No more overly restrictive monetary policies. We suggest that, instead, institutions be set up in Québec and in the rest of Canada for consultation and cooperation between business communities, trade unions and the government in order to control inflation, strengthen our competitive position internationally and step up employment growth.

These 15 recommendations constitute an ambitious program, Mr. Chairman. They appear to our members to be the minimum required to ensure that Québec firms will be able to create the jobs and wealth essential to the quality of life of all Quebecers and to the progress of our society.

As I pointed out earlier, these recommendations are supported by a broad consensus within the Québec business community. I am sure that you will give them the attention they deserve. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Lambert. Let's move on to the question period. The questions will be addressed to you, Mr. Lambert, and it will be up to you to indicate which of your colleagues will respond.

We are going to begin, if you will, with Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Lambert, it is Mr. Arsenault, I believe, who is with you, is it not?

**Mr. Lambert:** Unfortunately, he is ill this morning. I have with me Mr. Joly, who is our first elected vice-president, our executive vice-president, Mr. Descôteaux, and Mr. Rabreau.

**Mr. Rémillard:** I would like to thank you for agreeing to appear before the Commission and also for your brief, the excellent brief that you have presented to us today. You have presented a very complete, well-structured brief, and it will undoubtedly be one of the more complete and most interesting that we will have to examine, and for that I thank you. You have enabled us to get our proceedings off to an excellent start, in a particularly serious fashion.

Mr. Lambert, as you have just explained to us, you are not taking a stand for a federal system or any other system. You rule out the status quo, you also rule out what could be described as "pure, hardline" independence, but, between the two, you leave different options. I must say that you have some very harsh criticism, however, for the present federal system. Your conclusion is very clear, it seems to me: federalism, as it is currently practised, is an economic failure or close to it. You propose new fields of jurisdiction, beginning on page 16 of your brief in particular. What you propose is exceptionally eloquent, but, given your assessment of federalism, Mr. Lambert, how do you explain the fact that Québec's economic performance has nonetheless been outstanding in recent years?

**Mr. Lambert:** Mr. Minister, we acknowledge that the situation which has existed in recent years hasn't been a total failure. We are projecting what we would like to see in the future in order for things to be even better. That is the spirit in which our brief was drawn up and presented. When you examine the question of public finances alone, well, here in Québec, maybe we've managed to keep public finances sound, but, at the federal level, there is evidence to the contrary. That particular matter alone generates considerable pressures which have created the situation in which we find ourselves today.

We have two factors with a direct impact on the interest rate situation, for instance, and when you have a debt such as the one we now have at the federal level, there is a direct relation between that debt and the interest rate structure. So, today we are feeling the after-effects when we see our business firms having trouble staying afloat. Well, in our brief, we propose ways to solve these problems in the future.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Lambert, in your brief

you do not spell out any definite position. But on reading your brief, one nevertheless has the impression that what you are proposing is renewed federalism involving far-reaching changes, with many new fields of jurisdiction for Québec, for the provinces. Can you tell us how, in your view, we could negotiate this new federalism in the wake of the collapse of Meech?

**Mr. Lambert:** Mr. Minister, we have drawn up our brief in a sector where we think we are qualified. We believe that it is precisely the role of the Commission to see how certain negotiations or mechanisms could be set up. We will wait until the Commission makes recommendations to that effect and will take a stand according to the opinions that will be expressed here.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine. We will be hearing again from Mr. Rémillard a little later. Now we will ask Mr. Ghislain Dufour to speak. Mr. Dufour, you have the floor.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too would like to stress how well thought-out this brief is and I must say to President Lambert that I am in total agreement with the analysis of the economic difficulties we are now encountering in Canada, particularly where interest rates are concerned. Notwithstanding what happens in the future, I think that recommendation 13, which proposes full regional representation on the board of directors of the Bank of Canada, should be acted upon as soon as possible; we're in agreement on that point. (11:30 a.m.)

Mr. Lambert, I come back to pages 3 and 4, where you place your brief in perspective. You reject the status quo, you reject "pure, hardline" independence. On page 4, the last part of the paragraph, what is important to the Chambre is that all people of goodwill from across the country be brought together without delay in order to formulate a renewed vision of Canada that will rally the support of the majority. This new Canada will have to be the outcome of discussions and negotiations which must begin as quickly as possible. Mr. Rémillard has obviously asked you the question of how. I can understand why business people must be much more interested in the first part. The how is much more a political decision to be made eventually and I agree entirely with the answer you gave. But you say: In our opinion, the rules of caution imposed by the mandatory protection of our economic assets must be strictly observed. The entire first part of your brief deals with that question; you went over that section too quickly, I feel. Would you please expand a bit on those economic assets which you mention in your brief?

**Mr. Lambert:** Mr. Dufour, I refer you to page 8 of our brief. When we stress the question of our economic assets, we mean that we refuse any restriction on the free movement of persons, goods and capital which now exists throughout Canada. We also categorically oppose the erection of new tariff barriers to financial transactions and trade. We want Québec to continue to respect the trade treaties that are already part and parcel of the Canadian federation, such as the GATT, free trade, the Uruguay Round, agreements in which Canada is a participant. Québec must strive to show that we want to continue to play an active role in promoting free interprovincial and international trade. When we speak of assets, we also mean the common market existing within the country. These are several areas where we want Québec to retain its existing assets, but we would also like to mention one last one, which is the whole question of fiscal competitiveness which exists and where, in recent years, Québec has really caught up, I would say, with its immediate neighbour and has now even overtaken it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Is that all, Mr. Dufour?

**Mr. Dufour:** I'll continue later.

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

**Mr. Larose:** Mr. Chairman, it is most refreshing to have a brief of this quality from a highly representative business group in our society, especially as this brief is the product of an exemplary democratic process confirmed by internal discussion. I must tell you that it is certainly a major contribution to our debate. I wish to congratulate the Chambre de commerce for undertaking such a vast and detailed project as that presented to us this morning.

I have two rather simple questions. It is said that you rule out the status quo and that you reject "pure, hardline" independence. I think you are saying what the Commission itself has already agreed on, that there is no question of the status quo and that there is no question of "pure, hardline" independence in the sense that Québec's political option would mean severing the trade ties that exist with the rest of Canada and North America. No one is talking here of any plan to throw up economic barricades around Québec. On the contrary, what we are talking about is a project that could create new conditions that would provide Québec with more leeway for further development.

You mention, on page 15, on page 16 and on page 17, what I would call an assumption that is nonetheless fraught with consequences, when you say that exclusive jurisdiction - I'm on page 15, at the bottom - "Québec must be given

exclusive jurisdiction in all matters that are basically regional or local in nature and in every regional or local aspect of matters whose field of application extends beyond Québec's borders."

You say on page 16, in the middle paragraph: "If a federalist option is chosen, we think it necessary that the provincial level be given exclusive jurisdiction in the following fields." You listed them for us a few moments ago.

And on page 17, in the second last paragraph, you say: "In a confederal or European-type system, all income taxes would be levied by Québec, which would then hand over to Ottawa the portion corresponding to the scope of the powers delegated to the new Canadian structure." In the search for what I would call a new framework of links with Canada, do you have any indications, with all the contacts you have, that this proposal is likely to rally the support of allies outside Québec? What I mean is, you who are concerned that not only there be continuity, but that conditions be created that would foster an improved living standard and greater prosperity in Québec... one might guess that roughly the same thing applies on the Canadian side; they are going to be seeking a framework that would be conducive to development and ensure continuity but also improve their own quality of life. Who are our allies on the other side, in order that we might reach a new redistribution arrangement of that type?

**Mr. Lambert:** I'll begin by saying that, after we had prepared our brief, we didn't test out the ideas we put forward because we believe.... Our position is that that's a decision for Québec to make and once that is done, we will be able to initiate discussions or negotiations. That is the first point I would make.

Secondly, we believe that, in a contract, there are always at least two parties, that a contract, for all intents and purposes, is finally signed when there are advantages in it for both parties, and once you are able to demonstrate that there are advantages for the other party, well, normally, a solution can be found.

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

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

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would certainly like to add my congratulations to all those you have already received for the quality of your brief which is indeed excellent and, of those I have read to date, certainly one that will have an impact on our proceedings for the weeks and months to come.

My question will be relatively brief because it refers back to Mr. Larose's remarks a few minutes ago. You criticize quite, I would even say very, harshly, the pan-Canadian system of equalization which is now in effect and which, I believe, is one of the foundations of the present Canadian federation. It is well known that any State, any country - and I'm thinking in this case of Canada - only has meaning to the extent that, beyond purely economic considerations, there is an idea, an ideology, an image, an ideal that the individual can identify with and adopt. In a context where a collective pan-Canadian system would be severed of a major component like equalization, do you think it is realistic to expect to find any allies or support outside Québec for a proposed renewed federation severed of this major component?

**Mr. Lambert:** Mr. Chairman, perhaps I could ask Mr. Rabeau to answer that question.

**Mr. Rabeau (Yves):** The spirit of the brief here is to point out that there are problems at present with the equalization payment mechanism, and the members of the Chambre de commerce were concerned about the fact that a certain number of provinces have become dependent on federal transfers, and that, as time goes by, this financial dependence mechanism seems to be increasing with time rather than improving. What we propose in our brief is that the mechanisms of equalization be rethought so that what has been called here in Canada the vicious circle of dependence on federal transfers can be stopped, so that we may find formulas that would induce the provinces to be more independent financially. One formula, for instance, would be an unconditional transfer that is not linked to economic indicators, things of that nature, and the provinces must, in short, make do with a certain amount and operate in such a way as to no longer be constantly begging or asking for federal funds. I think that was basically the principle involved. We think it is time to re-examine the whole operation of the equalization mechanism.

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

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The next speaker will be Mr. Lucien Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you. Mr. Lambert, you don't rule out any constitutional hypothesis within a very broad area whose only boundaries are the status quo on one side and "pure, hardline" independence on the other. No option between the two is ruled out, if I understand correctly.



**Mr. Lambert:** That's correct.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Which means, for example, that Albania and North Korea are ruled out, but not necessarily a sovereign Québec which acknowledges its economic interdependence, which is prepared to integrate it with the other economic components of its field of operation, that we can consider that option to be on the table for the time being, that you have not as yet ruled it out?

**Mr. Lambert:** As you have just said, all options are open, and we will take a stand in due course, and, as part of the position we adopt, we will examine the whole economic aspect and say: Here is the vehicle that best fulfils the aspirations of business people for the security of Quebecers.

**Mr. Bouchard:** In other words, you would not like, today, to be tied down to the label of renewed federalism?

**Mr. Lambert:** We do not want to be tied down to any label today.

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

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Lambert, since we don't have much time, please consider yourself congratulated.

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

**Mr. Béland:** I too have some problems, when I read your brief, with the stress you place on acting quickly and decisively – your second recommendation. In other words, we have to move quickly because time is of the essence. If we don't, we may run into problems. But the negotiation agenda you propose is extremely vast. For example, you say that we have to abolish or minimize all intergovernmental overlapping, inconsistencies and duplication. Just last week, I was reading a report by the Conseil économique that goes back to 1975 in which they say the same thing. How do you think that we can act quickly and decisively with such a broad agenda? This is my first question.  
(11:45 a.m.)

Now for my second question. You have some very interesting things to say about financial institutions. You boast... What you say in effect is that Québec has constantly had its foot on the accelerator and that Ottawa has jammed on all brakes. You even say, I understand that you say that all the financial systems were developed by Québec despite the federal government, because you cite S-31, the International Centre, etc. But when you get to the question of banks, you say that we better

leave things as they are, even though you know that for us at Desjardins, for example, we are constantly having to fight because we're treated like parasites in the system. So, with this in mind, do you include in your recommendation the possibility of creating banks or having financial institutions called banks in Québec?

**Mr. Lambert:** I would like to begin by answering your first question, Mr. Béland. Obviously, we're going to keep coming back to this. There are clearly many different vehicles we can put the engine we have talked about today into. We'll have to decide whether it should go into a Chevrolet, for instance, or a Toyota or a Volkswagen. I don't have the answer today, but I do know that we have the tools and the means. What we will be doing, once everyone has had their say here and all the different opportunities or vehicles have been discussed before this Commission, is to first take a stand in this matter and then perhaps take a look at the question of speed. We too wondered about the question of speed. What did it mean? Because obviously I don't have to tell you or your colleagues what political uncertainty implies in terms of exchange market fluctuations. And we feel that once this Commission has reported its findings we'll be in a position to take a stand and settle this matter within the following year – within a year, in other words. If we have the will – if we are really determined – well then we will be able to do it.

The second question you raise is obviously a bit more technical. Are we capable of setting up banks or things like that? We raised the question of the Canadian banking system because of its quality and strength compared to that of our neighbour to the south. When we look at what you have accomplished with Desjardins, we consider that what you have built amounts to a bank and that you have developed the same quality as the banking system. From there to saying "Go ahead and create banks, we have the required legislation"... well, we have procedure B and procedure C, so there is always the possibility of doing so.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you.

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

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Lambert, I would like to congratulate you and the Chambre de commerce du Québec. Your brief was excellent. I remember years back, when we both played hockey as schoolboys at Saint-Jean-Eudes, you were an excellent skater and...

**Gallery:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Ouellet:** ...as you were answering Mr.

Bouchard's and Mr. Rémillard's questions, I remembered how you would hardly ever let yourself get caught in a corner. I must say that you were an excellent scorer and this morning's brief scores some excellent points and I would like to congratulate you. Although I have some reservations regarding certain premises, I can tell you that I am very favourable to almost all of the 15 recommendations. Since time is of the essence, here, I will limit myself to two short questions.

You say, in fact this is your first recommendation, that the integrity of the Canadian common market must be protected. How can you reconcile this recommendation that you see as being so important, since it is your first, with your other recommendation that Québec have control over manpower, unemployment insurance, and research and development? How do you reconcile the exercise of these powers with the need to guarantee a Canadian common market - with regard to manpower mobility, for example? How can you reconcile the fact that, if I take the example that you give on page 17, concerning the European Community, where, this model that you give, powers are exercised by the European Community on vague impulses in the fields of manpower, occupational training, education, and research and development, when in fact the member governments delegated a part of their responsibilities to the federal level? So much for my first question.

My second question deals with a remark you made on page 14, which is pretty forceful. You say that the federal system is very expensive and costly, and you even talk about several billions in outright losses. I think that in any federal system a degree of overlapping is inevitable between powers reserved for one level of government and those granted to another, but there is nothing in your brief - I went over it very carefully - there is nothing that enables us to measure or evaluate the real costs of this duplication. Do you have precise figures in this connection, and if so could you give them to us?

**Mr. Lambert:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask Mr. Descôteaux to answer the first question and Mr. Rabeau the second.

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

**Mr. Descôteaux (Claude):** Mr. Ouellet, our president may at one time have been lucky enough to play hockey a lot, but I had the good fortune in an earlier life of sitting in this room. We see the integrity of the Canadian common market as being particularly important because of the economic space we all simultaneously need, and we hardly see why Québec - and even less the rest of Canada - would want to manage without it. Therefore, it is by no means

contradictory to make it a key priority.

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

**Mr. Rabeau:** Well, regarding the question of the high cost of federalism, essentially, what the Chambre meant to attack was the current duplication of government departments, the dovetailing of powers. We did, in fact, consult a number of studies on the question, which are mentioned in the text, where we give a very detailed list of all the duplications existing at this time, for example. We did not wish to quote any figures because there are no studies that have gone so far as to do so. When we examined all of this overlapping and duplication, however, we did feel that we could save several billions of dollars if powers were assigned to either the federal or provincial level, putting an end to bureaucratic, departmental and other duplications. I believe that this may be one of the most important gains to be achieved from this forum, for the Canadian federation - the governments of Canada and Québec included. If Québec were completely in charge of how the job market operates, for example, we could have a job market that is much more efficient and much more attuned to the needs of businesses in this job market.

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

**Mr. Ouellet:** That does not really answer my question as stated, but it opens the door to further discussion. I assume that we will be coming back to this point fairly often. Your statement appears to be founded but I would like us to examine it more closely - to see if the billions you refer to are really there.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Perhaps we could call them back as experts. Mr. Serge Turgeon.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know if you've read this morning's editorial in *Le Soleil*, Mr. Lambert, but what it says basically is that when an organization as level-headed as the *Chambre de commerce* presents a brief worthy of the most fervent of nationalists, it is a sign that things have changed a great deal in Québec. I don't know whether or not you agree at all with this...

Now, I would like to say that I am a bit surprised that the many business people and academics who worked on this excellent brief show so little interest - hardly any at all in fact - in culture. For businesses and business people develop in a given environment - a cultural environment. Speaking in terms of dollars and cents, if money is something we

understand better here, the cultural phenomenon in Québec, in Québec alone, is worth something in the vicinity of \$6 billion at least, and of course I'm excluding research from that figure as well as several communications sectors.

I would like to know why so little attention has been paid to this matter. We cannot debate the issue of Québec's future solely in purely economic terms.

**Mr. Lambert:** Mr. Turgeon, I would like to say something first with reference to the editorial you mention. I would just like to say that business people are human too. They are members of society and they therefore have reactions. Obviously, at a given point, with a debate as important as this one, business people feel strongly about being there and saying what they think. We wanted to have our say and it came out loud and clear.

As for your second question, perhaps we did not stress it enough in our brief but we did say that when one has the economic strength, obviously one can afford everything there is and everything one wants in cultural terms. I repeat once more today that the stronger our economy is the broader our culture can be, the more services it can provide and the greater its accessibility to all Quebecers.

**Mr. Turgeon:** All right. One last thing. Mr. Bouchard tried very skillfully to get you to say that you do not accept the "renewed federalism" label any more than you do that of "staunch sovereignty". But on page 32 of your brief you say that it would be feasible for Québec to have its own currency. You say that this option could be every bit as viable for Québec as it is now for such countries of comparable or smaller size as Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. There would be a lack of confidence in the new currency at first but this problem could be solved in one of two ways. How do you reconcile this statement with your rejection of "pure, hardline" independence?

**Mr. Lambert:** There is a big difference between talking about a possibility and taking a stand. When we studied the question of a monetary union, and by the way there is a prominent Canadian expert, and we refer to him - Professor David Laidler, who has written on this subject and who has also said that it would be theoretically possible for Québec to have its own currency - except that in our case, in the debate that concerns us and in the economic question that concerns us, we focused on the question of a Canadian monetary union and decided it would be preferable for all Quebecers to use Canadian currency. But we did not exclude and we didn't want to play down the fact that we had considered that possibility.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Lambert, I have read, as we all have, your document. I see it in two lights. I appreciate it, but that goes without saying. I see it in the light of my new career and I also see it from the viewpoint of a career that was mine for many years.

(12:00 noon)

So, when I read this document, I easily find myself back at the École des hautes études commerciales with the economists, market development people and the human resources people in the department where I was, and I find it a little theoretical. Needless to say, I believe that the economy can thrive through culture and human values. At any rate, values like culture necessarily come before the economy. You say, in your first statement, that you are only looking at the situation from a strictly economic perspective... that the business people that you represent, the Chambre, fit into a strictly economic slot. But this economic space must necessarily be experienced and breathed in on a daily basis. I would like to ask you, in the few minutes I am allowed, how you could apply this theoretical canvas to everyday reality, the reality of life and of human beings. You also mentioned a little while back, in answer to Mr. Turgeon's question, that we were all human. You speak of uncertainty too. But uncertainty is not an econometric model, it is a human model; Maslow is a human reality. I would appreciate it if you could place this impressive document in the context of the reality experienced by a business person, a manager or an employer going about their daily business.

**Mr. Lambert:** I would like to ask Mr. Joly to answer this question, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Joly (Clément):** Mr. Hogue, I think that I will answer you as follows. People in business are concerned about Canada's constitutional orientation on the one hand, but they also want to ensure that there will be stability. What we attempted to do, at the economic level, was to cover various aspects, and we said that there were problems in some places but solutions in others. And, as business men and women, we say that there is room for change. We did not define the changes that should be made, that is the whole point of this Commission. We will indicate our particular leanings later on. At this early point in the proceedings, we find ourselves in a position this morning where we are still breaking

the ice, so we reinforced the economic viewpoint.

**Mr. Lambert:** Mr. Chairman, could I add something?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have something to add?

**Mr. Lambert:** Yes.

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

**Mr. Lambert:** I would like to say, further to my colleague's comments, that you will have the opportunity of meeting people who are far more competent than we are in human matters and they will be able to tell you about the implications of certain changes. Since we had no desire to pass for human affairs experts, we dealt with only one aspect of the question, that with which we are the most familiar.

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

**Mr. Hogue:** Mr. Lambert, please take my comment positively. All I am doing is applying an econometric or economic model to human reality; I am not attacking it. Obviously, I would never take the risk of touching the material of a colleague such as Rabeau. So, please take it positively. Since your document is of definite value, it will necessarily be used, everyone has said so. You also said that there are many vehicles that the engine could be placed into, but that this depends and will be determined by human reality. Is this what you meant?

**Mr. Lambert:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Hogue:** Then the vehicle's body is made up of human beings.

**Mr. Lambert:** Yes, absolutely.

**Mr. Hogue:** The engine was your... So, you mustn't have the heart of a Béliveau like a number of years ago, Cadillacs and all that. All I mean is that, with your wisdom and competence, I would really appreciate it if you could situate... because you situate things in the short term, where all is calm. But, as you know, humans do not react calmly. They react emotionally and it takes a while to build countries, it takes a while to apply. Your views could be given, not your views as a specialist, but your views as a president.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Poissant, you may have four minutes. That will

be fine. So, we have four minutes left out of the reserve of 40 minutes.

**Mr. Poissant:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Others have asked you questions before me, but I have a specific question for you. You say on page 5 of your brief that for the time being you do not wish to take a stand on the constitutional issue. Obviously, when I read your brief, I was hoping for some suggestions or recommendations. But I can understand. You say that we will be meeting experts. I agree with you. But you must understand that the province's *Chambre de commerce* plays an exceptional role in influencing our opinion. I was going to ask, Mr. Chairman, if it might not be helpful to ask the *Chambre de commerce* to prepare a second brief, perhaps after it has heard what the others have to say in their briefs, so that it might influence us. Because it is true that experts are going to be taking part in these proceedings but we are going to be questioning individuals, not Québec at large, so to speak, not the economic community of Québec at large. If you will allow me, Mr. Turgeon, they clearly say in their brief on page 5 also that, to the contrary, the history of all peoples shows that a strong economy is the indispensable support of a strong culture - which includes language... everything. I completely agree with you on this. My question is this: Could we recall them, if you will, after all the briefs have been heard? You do have a committee that is quite important and quite influential in the province of Québec. So, could we do that?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The steering committee will look into the matter to determine whether or not we can recall the members of the *Chambre de commerce*, provided they wish it of course.

**Mr. Poissant:** Are my four minutes up, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I believe you have 30 seconds left.

**Mr. Poissant:** In your brief, which obviously includes a lot of extremely interesting information, there is a paragraph on page 34 in which you speak of floating currency. I imagine that very few people will be talking about this. Could you explain what this means? I understand that you take it for granted that it is bad for us to have a currency, because you make comparisons with other countries and we are one of the rare ones, though not the only one, to have a floating currency. Could we have some explanations? What would it mean if within a future currency or a future constitutional program... should we consider not allowing this currency to float?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Poissant, this will have to wait until they return. Your time is up.

**Mr. Poissant:** I take it, then, that they are going to come back? Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** All right, then. If you can answer quickly, you may answer the question.

**Mr. Lambert:** No, I do not really think that I can answer such a pointed question quickly.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Well then, the 40 minutes allotted have now been used up. I would like to call on Mr. Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I noted a discrepancy that it may be important to point out between the preliminary version of your brief and your final version. In the preliminary version, you stated that, from this angle, neither the status quo nor "pure, hardline" independence is possible or acceptable and that we need to arrive at a happy medium between the two. This is why several participants here have used this expression with respect to independence. But your final version is different. You say that the merits of the principal hypotheses foreseeable must be examined from this angle, and you refer to renewed federalism, creation of an economic community or confederation, and independence – the expression "pure, hardline" was removed. I think that it was a good idea to get rid of it because, in my opinion, no one in Québec is in favour of "pure, hardline" independence. I cannot think of a soul. In fact, I'm not even sure I know what it means exactly. Is the opposite of "pure, hardline" independence supposed to be "impure, softline" independence? I just don't know. Seriously, though, if it could be taken as implying a form of isolationism or autarchic desire to withdraw within oneself, then I think that hearing the commissioners yesterday was all it took for us to understand that no one is interested in "pure, hardline" independence in Québec. I see or I acknowledge that you realized this, that there was no one, and that you therefore removed it from your brief, because it does not appear in your final version. I understand why... Mr. Lambert...

**Mr. Lambert:** I would just like to say that in an organization, one works toward improvement...

**Mr. Brassard:** I want to congratulate you on this correction and your desire for improvement, and I hope that my good friend Mr. Rémillard will also stop using this expression which doesn't really mean anything and doesn't

correspond to any ideology found in Québec society...

**Voice:** Or of anyone around this table.

**Mr. Brassard:** Or of anyone around this table, of course. Having said this, like the others here, I found your brief very articulate and very extensive. I realize that you do not wish to choose the vehicle, to use your expression, but when we look at the sweeping repatriation – I think one would have to say sweeping – the sweeping repatriation of powers to Québec that you would like to see and even demand, from occupational training, of course, to the abolishment of transfer payments, review of the equalization system, unemployment insurance, research and development, etc., a massive repatriation of powers to Québec, and the fact that at the same time you say that this has to be done – this point is the same in both the preliminary and the final version – you say that the constitutional question has to be settled quickly and decisively. I think that you are undoubtedly right. But given that you want this question to be dealt with quickly and decisively and that at the same time you demand and hope for such a sweeping transfer of powers to Québec, are you well aware of the fact that the path or vehicle of renewed federalism entails a number of major obstacles and problems that some people consider insurmountable, because the negotiation procedure provided for by the constitution and the procedure for amendment requires, at the very least, the support of this province and 50% of the population for constitutional amendments to be made? We know where this has led in the past. It led to the impasse and failure of Meech, but there have also been other failures. Take the example of occupational training alone, which you call for, as you well know, I don't need to tell you, you saw what happened in 1966: Mr. Johnson – Daniel – asked for it in 1968; Mr. Bertrand asked for it in 1971; Mr. Bourassa asked for it in Victoria in 1979; Mr. Lévesque asked for it; and Mr. Bourbeau has been asking for it for quite a while now. Nothing has ever come of all this. Are you aware that the path to renewed federalism, a path that consists of placing ourselves within the Canadian constitutional context with the negotiation and amendment procedure this entails, is fraught not only with difficulties, which some see as being insurmountable, but also that it is impossible to settle the matter quickly decisively, given the past, given the lessons we have learned from the past?

(12:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Lambert:** Mr. Chairman, we are aware, I believe, of having drafted a document in which we strongly believe. But there are certain factors over which we have no control, speaking

in terms of the *Chambre de commerce per se*. For example, I do not control the consensus of this worthy Commission. For example, I do not control the way in which Quebecers will voice their opinion. These factors will have a decisive influence, these two points, on how we can act quickly and decisively.

**Mr. Brassard:** I understand that you did not want to take a stand today. You have repeated this over and over, and I understand this. I accept it and I also respect it. But I just wanted you to say or confirm for us that the renewed federalism option in the current constitutional context, with the negotiation procedure with 11 governments, presents problems and that this makes it difficult to settle the question promptly, diligently and rapidly. This admission is all that I wanted you to recognize, and not lay a trap for you, try to lay a trap for you or force you to choose the vehicle or means.

**Mr. Lambert:** I did not answer in terms of thinking that you might be laying a trap for me. I merely wanted to specify two factors over which I personally have no control. There is one thing we know, if there are 40 000 people in the business community who think what we have just presented here, and we are members of a society, we must not be the only ones who feel this strongly... my first point. My second point is that if in the countries of Eastern Europe they have been able to make changes as drastic as those that have been made in one year, I find it hard to believe that, after 25 or 30 years of discussions, here in this country we are unable to make quick, decisive decisions on an issue such as this one.

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

**Mr. Parizeau:** First of all, I would like to apologize for arriving at the last minute like this. I was meeting Mr. Fabius. That is why, as you must have been told, Mr. Lambert, I could not make it until so late in the game.

I would like to begin by apologizing to you, Mr. Lambert. I was directly involved in the process of choosing the Commission members and, in the case I am concerned with at present, of members representing the business community, I shared in a very formal initiative with regard to the *Chambre de commerce du Québec* that was not followed through because, for reasons beyond my control, events did not proceed, I feel, as they should have. I would like to take this opportunity to offer an apology.

Having said this, what struck me most about your presentation is that, basically, for the first time, I think, at any rate for the first time in a long while, the business community makes explicit the economic environment that it

feels would be the most desirable for the development of business. Often, when we discuss these things, either we stop before we have gone very far or we have a difficult time going beyond very general principles. In your brief, the principles are not general. The economic environment desired by the business community of Québec is presented more explicitly, as I see it, than it ever has been before.

This desirable economic environment that you outline for us implies major changes in how the Canadian government and administrative system operate, not only at the federal level, but at the level of each province. It is so important – perhaps this has been stressed already and if so, I apologize – that it would appear that if we exclude the interest charges in the federal budget, 60% to 70% of the existing federal government programs could be compromised. It is therefore, I think, a lot to ask of English Canada, particularly since the business community in English Canada does not necessarily define the best economic environment in the same terms.

Supposing that it is established very clearly and very rapidly that, with regard to these major changes that you propose, the answer is "no". Do you anticipate the possibility that this desirable environment for business might endorse sovereignty for Québec, sovereignty combined with economic association of course, in whatever shape or form, but sovereignty for Québec? Supposing that the answer is "no" on the other side, do we opt for sovereignty-association in order to bring about this desirable economic environment?

**Mr. Lambert:** Mr. Parizeau, as I have had the opportunity to announce prior to this, we have, for the time being, presented elements, as you have just said, in economic terms, that are major. We have taken a position based solely on what we believe, namely, that we have a bit of knowledge in this area, but we absolutely did not look into how these things could be brought about. It comes down to how. And we basically gave ourself the goal, and perhaps this will help answer an earlier question from another commissioner, of defining our position on this issue in the next few months when we will be looking at the different vehicles proposed. Well, when that time comes, we will take a stand.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I am going to ask Mr. Rémillard to take the floor now.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Lambert, the more we hear from you – and from Mr. Rabeau, Mr. Descôteaux and Mr. Joly – the more we appreciate your brief. It is a sensible brief, a brief founded on a desire for efficiency, and you propose, with this new

federalism that you propose, in some ways, major and fundamental changes to what we have now and I must say that it is very interesting reading about these changes. Among other things, on page 16 of your brief, where you list the exclusive powers that would be under the provinces' jurisdiction, and also where you take a look at the powers that could be discussed with the federal government, I believe that you have there, in one paragraph of your report, an extremely interesting contribution to the Commission and, once again, let me congratulate you.

If you will allow me, I would like to highlight the economic institutions that you propose. You denounce the steep interest rates that are giving you a whipping, and you denounce the rates and variations in the value of the dollar which are giving Québec's economy a similar whipping. And you are absolutely right because it is these two elements that are essential to the economic progress of a society such as ours, and we suffer greatly, and very unfairly, from them from the outset. And you tackle the question of the central bank, the Canadian bank, saying that we need to take another look at the Bank of Canada, the central bank. You tell us that its management should be more representative and its decisions more transparent. I refer to a remark you make on page 35 of your brief. Mr. Lambert, what would Québec's place be in this reorganization, in this new administrative organization of the Bank of Canada?

**Mr. Lambert:** Mr. Rémillard, our model was the provision negotiated during the Meech Lake Accord for the nomination of judges to the Supreme Court. In other words, Québec could have, obviously, its own representatives appointed, to the Bank of Canada therefore, in terms and in proportion. This is how we approached this possibility. And the reason that we speak in these terms, of course, is that when you belong to a monetary union, when this is the case, we believe that it is important that the different regions be represented and that each region, as a voting member, be able to influence the decisions that would be made at the level of the institution.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Lambert, would Québec be a region like the others? You are referring to a Canada made up of from four to five regions? Would Québec be a region on the same footing as the other regions?

**Mr. Lambert:** This Canada of the future that we are talking about is not one that I am familiar with today. Perhaps it will be what the Commission decides it will be. But, as far as I am concerned, once we have arrived at our position... well, we will try to have a represen-

tation at the level of this institution that is in a position to represent Québec.

**Mr. Rémillard:** But you refer to the Bank of Canada. I am using the terms that you use on page 35: the Bank of Canada. So, you refer to the Bank of Canada. And this bank, then, would be made up of delegates from the different regions. So, you refer to regions, a new view of Canada. My second point.

Third, considering this, what place do you give Québec in this regional composition represented in an institution that you yourselves qualify as being so fundamental in your brief?

**Mr. Lambert:** Mr. Rémillard, when we talk about a monetary union, obviously, from that point where we talk about a monetary union, we could perhaps take a look at what is happening, for instance, in the countries of Europe, the European Economic Community in other words, who have formed their own currency. Every one of these countries belongs to this organization and every one not only participates in it but also attempts to influence its decisions.

I do not know, at this time, what this union might be as such, this monetary union. Nor do I know whether we will have ten, four, three or two regions as such. So, I am not in a position to give you a definite answer. I am still speaking in principle. So, in principle, I tell you that we must have appropriate representation in the organization that...

**Mr. Rémillard:** But, if I read you clearly, Mr. Lambert, you refer to the model of the European economic market.

**Mr. Lambert:** Pardon me, Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** If I understand your explanations correctly, you refer to the model of the European economic market: the European Economic Community. (12:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Lambert:** Yes, that is the example I just gave.

**Mr. Rémillard:** My colleague, Mr. Benoit, has a question for you.

**Mr. Benoit:** Like Mr. Turgeon and Mr. Poissant, I would like to go back, Mr. Lambert, to the aspect dealing with how to reestablish monetary stability. First of all, you suggest a status quo situation with a monetary union. This was your proposal. But you say that we could look into a Québec dollar indexed, or tied, to the Canadian dollar or, possibly, to the U.S. dollar. O.K. What would happen to the Québec debt, which is in Canadian dollars, or the debt of companies such as that of Mr. Poissant, also in Canadian dollars. What would happen in the

days following an agreement with either Canada or the United States for the Québec dollar?

**Mr. Lambert:** Mr. Benoit, we did not recommend a Québec dollar, we merely gave you the information that we had looked into. We studied the possibility or theory of there being a Québec dollar. Therefore, I cannot answer your question. It was not a recommendation.

**Mr. Benoit:** You recommended the status quo with improvement of the Bank of Canada. Is that right?

**Mr. Lambert:** It was a Canadian monetary union with a revamped and renewed Bank of Canada.

**Mr. Rémillard:** That's right. In this context, Mr. Lambert, with reference to page 16 of your brief, I know that you no longer want the equalization system as it is today, and you are absolutely right – it is a system for beggars. You are right to want to get rid of it. Now, you say that we would have to discuss the redistribution of revenue among the provinces with the federal government, at the end of the paragraph in the middle of page 16. What do you mean by redistribution of revenue among the provinces, still with reference to your conception of this Canada of the future made up of regions, which seems to be your present view of federalism?

**Mr. Lambert:** I would just like to tell Mr. Rémillard that I absolutely did not in any way suggest what kind of Canada there should be. I would like to make this very clear. I have not taken any stand on this issue, but merely given some examples. Now, as far as a concrete answer to your question is concerned, I would like to call upon Mr. Rabeau.

**Mr. Rabeau:** As I mentioned earlier, in effect, what is involved here is finding a new way of redistributing wealth via equalization in the Canadian union, but doing it by means of mechanisms that put an end to the financial dependence of a number of provinces upon the federal government. In accordance with various wealth criteria, we could arrive at a mechanism for redistributing wealth in Canada, but that would no longer be modeled after the equalization system we have now, because of the results it has led to, with which we are very familiar, where certain provinces, in eastern Canada particularly, have become more and more dependent on federal transfers. This is what we would like to avoid.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine. Now, your time has definitely run out. Mr.

Bélanger, if you have any questions....

**Mr. Bélanger (Guy):** Just one short question on the consultation that you propose for resisting inflation as opposed to monetary policy. I just don't know what to think about this because the three parties to this consultation, the governments – past history has taught us that monarchs depreciated currency – the unions aim, and this is quite normal, to try to get as much as possible for their members and, when in doubt, to ask for more rather than less. This is normal. And as for businesses, they too have an interest in boosting their prices when in doubt, to protect their margins. Three sinners, so to speak, who have never been able to resist temptation, would be brought together and, all of a sudden, collectively, all three of them would become virtuous. How is it that you make us give up the interest of individuals in order to embrace the common good, which would lead us to virtue and thus replace the constraints of monetary policy?

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

**Mr. Lambert:** Mr. Bélanger, let me tell you that for just over a year now I have been involved in the forum's employment study where the large majority of the participants find themselves around the same table. From what I have learned so far, this consultation is a success. Needless to say, this has been an education. Actually, the Conseil économique, I believe – wasn't it Mr. Rabeau? – talked about this, only recently and along the same lines, this "natural remedy" for curbing inflation. I believe that it is therefore possible. There are some striking examples in other countries where this works well. So here, I think that our society is now, I believe – I don't mean that it wasn't completely – but I am saying that today it is mature and we have reached a point where we are capable of taking steps in this direction in order to look into possibilities for administering on a regional basis.

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** I'm prepared to believe that it works and very delighted but did it really cut down on inflation?

**Mr. Lambert:** This is what the studies have shown.

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** Then we are delighted.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Now, since there are a few minutes left of the time allotted to the Chair, I would like to ask Mr. Deschamps if he has any questions.

**Mr. Deschamps (Serge):** Thank you, Mr.



Chairman. I am a little surprised. I would like to refer to page 16 of the document. When you talk about clarifying the respective jurisdictions of both the provincial and federal levels of government, you list the powers that would be granted to the provinces and, regarding the federal level, you mention immigration specifically. However, in one of your conclusions, at the end of your brief, you mention that, for immigration, Québec should have more powers, at least marginally, as indicated in the Meech Lake Accord. To my mind, this is a jurisdiction that is somewhat shared. How do you reconcile this position with your declaration to clarify areas of jurisdiction?

**Mr. Lambert:** I would like to ask Mr. Descôteaux if he might answer this question.

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

**Mr. Descôteaux:** Considering the very distinct character of Québec society, I think that the people joined together around this table all agree: the issue of immigration is especially crucial to the existence and future of Québec. It seems to us, at any rate, that the gouvernement du Québec should be given priority in the field of immigration, which is not to say, within the context of an agreement to be outlined at these proceedings, that agreements would not be passed with our partners so that we can coordinate a number of principles governing immigration.

**Mr. Lambert:** I would merely like to add, Mr. Chairman, that on page 16, regarding the question, the paragraph began as follows: If the federalist option is adopted....

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Does that help? I think that the time is up. So, Mr. Lambert, I would like, on behalf of the Commission, to thank all the members of the constitutional affairs committee of the Chambre de commerce du Québec. Obviously, today, I would like to thank Mr. Rabeau, Mr. Descôteaux and Mr. Joly, in particular. And our sincere thanks to you personally. It definitely takes a good pilot to accomplish a report such as yours. Our thanks to the Chambre de commerce.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Now, some announcements for Commission members. The next sitting will be at 4:30 p.m. this afternoon, with the Association des coopératives d'économie familiale. Those who would like to ask questions or participate will be able to register, as an exception, just before the sitting begins this afternoon, as of 4:00 p.m. Normally,

you sign up before the first sitting in the morning. Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:37 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:36 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I would like to repeat the rules for one-hour briefs.

Those presenting briefs have 10 minutes to do so. There are 5 minutes for the chair, 10 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the government, 10 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the official Opposition, and 25 minutes for members who have registered with the chair, with each member having a maximum of 5 minutes. The time allotted includes the question and the answer.

So, this afternoon, we are hearing the Fédération des ACEF du Québec, or Fédération des Associations coopératives d'économie familiale du Québec. I believe Mrs. Hémond is going to be presenting the 10-minute summary of the Fédération's brief. Before we begin, would you please introduce your colleagues, Mrs. Hémond?

#### Fédération des ACEF du Québec

**Mrs. Hémond (Monique):** Thank you. This is Hélène Arsenault, who heads the Fédération's public services committee and is the Lanaudière ACEF representative; Henri Goulet, who heads the Fédération's case working committee and represents the Montréal North ACEF; and myself, Monique Hémond, president of the Fédération des ACEF and representative of the Mauricie ACEF.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I'd like to welcome all three of you to the Parliamentary Commission.

**Mrs. Hémond:** Just to give some background on the Fédération des ACEF du Québec... this year the Fédération is celebrating its 20th anniversary. It represents 14 regional organizations, which are members of the Fédération and which are located in Québec's 10 major administrative regions.

I would also like to take two minutes to describe how this brief was produced. A few moments ago, I introduced the people from the Fédération's working committees. There are six working committees in the Fédération. The heads of these six committees together with the Fédération's executive council worked together to produce what you have before you, the Fédération's brief.

At the outset, you might feel... you might have the impression, and I think that this is confirmed somewhat, that our brief is somewhat out of sync with the other briefs and

organizations that have participated in this Commission. Clearly, our comments will be much more social than economic in nature. This is a direct result of our daily work with many Québec families. This work deals mainly with the socioeconomic issues these families have to face. The result, then, is that we feel a little out of sync and I realize that many commissioners would like the Commission to reflect the composition of the population it represents.

We feel there may be a weakness at this level. We feel that some people have been excluded from this process. I am referring mainly to social aid recipients, the unemployed, people working for minimum wage, those in a precarious work situation. In short, people in families with an annual income of \$25 000 or less. We have the impression that a gulf has been created as concerns this segment of the population.

In their opening remarks, many speakers mentioned the importance of maintaining the standard of living and the population's economic well-being. We feel that for a large part of the population - i.e. 1 000 000 people, at least 50% - it is not obvious that they would want to maintain their current standard of living. They are somewhat excluded from this whole process.

Another point we would like to raise, and I think you may have already heard it, but I will repeat it, is the perennial problem of the time available to prepare these briefs. We were short of time and resources because there were many areas we would have liked to develop more fully. Here are a few examples. One area we were unable to develop, but which we know exists, is that of the costs related to the growing poverty of the population and the indebtedness of Québec families. We know that these problems lead to various other types of social problems such as family violence, health problems and so on, that involve very high social and economic costs for society. We would have liked to investigate this more fully and bring our findings before you but didn't really have time. Another point, for instance, perhaps to clarify it as well, is the whole issue of reintegration programs and employability programs, set up for those in need, to reintegrate a large part of the population into society. When you think of the total failure of Bill 37... we feel that it proves that the basic problems have perhaps been left untouched and that Band-Aids have been applied rather than dealing with the basic problems.

Another problem we face, especially as a consumer group, is the non-recognition of problems specific to Québec and, in certain cases, program duplication. Here is an example: Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada cuts its funding to consumer groups in Québec on the pretext that we are regional, not national, groups. This creates an enormous amount of.... The problem is acute and as consumer groups, we have to deal with the harsh reality of these

types of problems. These three examples show that the insufficient time available to prepare briefs has perhaps prevented us from delving more deeply into specific aspects.

Nevertheless, we decided to participate in the exercise of defining the kind of Québec we want. Henri, sitting beside me, will discuss three issues which we feel have to be resolved in defining Québec's future, and here I'm referring to the first part of our brief. Hélène will then discuss six issues which we feel are priorities in defining a fairer and more equitable Québec society. That is the second part of our brief. So, I will now turn the microphone over to Henri.

**Mr. Goulet:** The first point we identified as a prerequisite to the six priorities we wanted to discuss is that we begin by working toward a more democratic society. In our brief, you will find the points we wanted to stress. Nonetheless, I'd like to take advantage of this Commission to mention that the community movement in Québec, to which we belong, works on a daily basis, broadly, differently, yet jointly to achieve a single objective, the same main objective, that is that people, through the various services, the various approaches we use, take themselves in hand; that people take responsibility for themselves; that people become autonomous. What we feel makes us unique is our work to ensure Québec families of financial autonomy. We want to cut all dependencies, and they are enormous, in our society. And our hope is that the reflection undertaken by the Commission, or a common blueprint of the future of Québec, would share that objective.

This morning, I read in the chairmen's opening remarks that, because the hearings will be public and because they will be televised and broadcast on radio, the population will be able to participate in this exercise. I agree, it's a worthwhile effort, but I think this passive participation could have been organized completely differently in the sense that the funds spent on this operation could have been used to broaden the debate, open it up and allow the public to have its say. Writing a brief isn't easy, you know. Nor is getting together to present a brief. It's not easy organizing ourselves to be heard. And it's not easy to be chosen to be heard here, to discuss and work so that the population as a whole takes this project to heart and makes it a common project. I think the general public should have been allowed to speak, and it's not too late to do so.

Everywhere, things operate as if the people were something to be feared. This was a unique opportunity to begin developing a collective memory. In an article written two weeks ago for *Le Devoir*, Fernand Dumont said: "A nation is built on the basis of historic reference points, a collective memory, events to which people can

refer." I think the discussion, the debate on Québec's future, could have been the beginning of that kind of reference point.

For us, a more democratic society means essentially three things at the outset. It means breaking the technocratic structures that thwart the efforts for change put forward by groups and associations in Québec. It also means giving serious thought to granting political autonomy to the regions of Québec; making Québec's regions accountable for their development in order to avoid the incredible waste, from every standpoint, that occurs at present. And one proposal we've made is that we create genuine joint social action by forming a department of social solidarity, because that kind of solidarity has to become a national priority.

I'm almost finished. The other two points we want to mention... the sixties were a time of modernization, the seventies, a time of recovery for the social class, the social and working classes in Québec; the eighties were devoted to the economy. Couldn't the nineties be the decade of a major social change in Québec?

When we spoke with immigrants to prepare our brief...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I have to warn you that you have only 15 to 20 seconds left. I wouldn't want to cut into the time allotted to Mrs. Arsenault.

**Mr. Goulet:** O.K. I wanted to make an important point about the status of immigrant communities. When we talked, the immigrants with whom we prepared our document told us to leave a blank page to symbolize their place in Québec society at present, and I think that's quite dramatic.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Arsenault, how long do you think you'll be?

**Mrs. Arsenault:** I'll simply wrap up, since I think I'll be able to say what I have to say during the question period.

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

**Mrs. Arsenault:** To conclude, I think I'll just read you the last page of our brief. We believe that, more than anything else, Québec needs a government with courage, a government that won't sweep its social problems under the carpet, a government that will stand up, that has backbone, that sees reality as it is, in other words a growing proportion of the population in poverty, in a precarious economic situation, unhappy, and that is something the numbers never show. The population is increasingly distressed and that is something the numbers never show. Economists don't talk about that. We

think it is important that all Quebecers, young, old, native, immigrant, rich or poor, recover their feeling of belonging to Québec, the feeling of having a role to play and of not being excluded from society's major issues.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. The first question goes to Mrs. Louise Bégin.

**Mrs. Bégin:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To begin with, I want to thank you for coming here to present your brief. I noted, while reading it, that you would like to see the Québec of tomorrow emphasize five major principles - in a context of working to eliminate poverty - combatting waste, and promoting recovery and recycling. You would like to see a fiscal policy based on fairness and social justice. Fourth, improve accessibility to public services and, fifth, make room for community organizations. Those are the five major principles I noted from reading your brief.

You conclude by saying - and I refer to page 27 of your brief where you say: "To ensure our economic and social development, we must repatriate the powers necessary to implement a blueprint for society". My question is this: what powers do you believe it is necessary to repatriate to implement your blueprint?

**Mrs. Arsenault:** I believe they're listed there. We need the political power to legislate. We need economic powers to turn things around when times are hard. We also need... to break the wall of bureaucratic power so that it becomes a kind of conveyor belt for the policies we have chosen.

**Mrs. Bégin:** Mrs. Arsenault, don't you think Québec already possesses such powers since the fact that previous legislation exists in these areas presupposes we had the necessary jurisdiction to act?

**Mrs. Arsenault:** I am convinced Québec continues to lack very significant powers needed to legislate.

**Mrs. Bégin:** Could you identify them?

**Mrs. Arsenault:** Certainly, powers in terms of labour legislation, which we recently discussed, in terms of immigration, and definitely in terms of repatriation of all fiscal resources.

**Mrs. Bégin:** But if you refer to section 92 of the British North America Act, the powers attributed to the provinces, those you've just named, already rest with Québec. So, I'd like to know which powers, in addition to those we already have - because we already have them - you would want to have to achieve your

objectives.

**Mr. Goulet:** I would like to give an example which deals with program duplication, and it's a major problem. When we speak of employability measures, when we speak of social program measures - at the very beginning, Monique gave an example of duplication and the complex relations between various government departments at the federal and provincial levels - this creates tremendous problems at the grassroots. For instance, people who are constantly being shunted from one program to another; I think that's very expensive for Québec. And when decisions are deferred from one level to another, that's also enormously expensive in operational terms. Looking at our brief, once it was complete, we realized we had what I would call "the bureaucratic syndrome". We were determined to tell this Commission that the problem of government bureaucracy, duplicated at three levels of government, is a serious social problem in our society today. And I believe we have to do some housekeeping, introduce some order, so that decisions are taken at one place at least, and that we stop shunting people among three levels of government, simply to be told that it's up to that level to make a decision; no it's up to that one to decide; no, no, the third one has to decide. And that happens everywhere, so that, when it comes to concretely working to solve problems, we are constantly being tripped up by this dynamic, and there's no light at the end of the tunnel.

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

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Thank you. Before I get to my questions, I would also like to thank you for coming before the Commission. Having read your brief, there are a number of things I would like to say: Lay these points before the commission that is currently working on reforming the public service, that is dealing with precisely those duplications, bureaucratic aspects and the headaches that they can mean for citizens... I would encourage you to do so.

I'm also particularly happy that your group has appeared here because you perhaps represent something we tend to forget: the poor and those who have no spokesperson, who don't have the opportunity to express what they want to say and, often enough, aren't sufficiently articulate to come before a body such as this. It intimidates them, it... We might be tempted to overlook them. So, the fact that you represent them, that you remind us that there are people who are poor, here in Québec, that there are pockets of poverty in some of our large centres and even elsewhere since many areas of Québec

are affected, I feel that is a reality that needs to be emphasized but which is more closely related to our social organization than to our constitutional option. Whatever decisions we take eventually, these issues will have to be taken into account, according to your message.

But to return to your last statement, you're telling us there are three levels... Basically, as you see it, the decision tree, to use a management term, isn't clear and causes a lot of headaches. I'd like to hear your comments on that again.

**Mr. Goulet:** Simply, what I was saying was that we... when you're involved in social work, within existing social programs, there are in fact three levels of government because, for instance, I'm from Montréal and the municipal administration runs, manages social programs that depend on the government and we're well aware that the social programs envelope includes large amounts that come from the federal government in terms of transfers of funds.

That means that in terms of access, if we want to satisfy needs, the doors... In any case, there's no such thing as a single window, obviously, and that makes defining responsibilities pretty complex. Where to go, who is responsible for this aspect or that aspect... yes, it's a pretty complicated jungle.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** My second question is that you talk to ordinary people, eh? The little people. And I'm not being pejorative, I believe the expression is accurate... real people, real life, like we often see in our riding offices. How do these people react to the questions we are asking today? How do they feel about this?

**Mrs. Hémond:** First, I'd like to... I realize you weren't being pejorative when you said we represent the poor, but I react a little bit because we represent more than that. We represent... in our brief - and I don't know on which page - we mention the debt burden of Québec families, for instance, those who have access to debt, we aren't talking of those in our society who are in greatest need, for instance, those on social aid. It's much broader than that because these people have a regular income, for instance, and a certain level of income. In that sense, I would like to reiterate. We represent a much broader spectrum. O.K.? So...

**Mr. Bélanger (Guy):** With all the nuances you add, what do these people think?

**Mrs. Hémond:** I think it's important because I feel you're a bit mistaken. What do they say? I think they say absolutely nothing about that, about what is happening here, or whether to get

involved. I think that, for some categories of the population, the problems are much more down to earth than that. At one point, in Trois-Rivières, we conducted a survey of families receiving social aid. The question of the future of Québec, I think, comes down to the future of their cheque. To put it bluntly, the first of the month becomes an important syndrome. In that sense, the major issues for the future are: how I, personally... And, when we spoke about a fairer tax system, for me, it's in that sense, that is how people can make sense of it, concretely and not in a more... I'd say in a theoretical way. Basically, they see it a bit theoretically. So, for us, the six principles mentioned earlier basically amount to bringing things back to ground level and saying: O.K., there are specific things to be decided and done to improve the situation of this part of the population.

**Mr. Bélanger (Guy):** When I read your brief - from my position in this forum and among the piles of material I've read - I say to myself: My goodness, that certainly has very socialist leanings, very... O.K. But at the outset, you said you viewed it through the prism of your reality which is people in difficulty, etc. and that these major issues are of little relevance. If I understand you, your brief was written with this reality uppermost in your mind. You didn't try to look at the major considerations in greater depth. So that, if for instance, I asked you - who are more articulate - what your position is on the constitutional future of Québec. If I asked you that, would that meet with your reality?

**Mrs. Hémond:** O.K. I'll answer you, but you'll be disappointed.

**Mr. Bélanger (Guy):** Really.

**Mrs. Hémond:** We speak for the Fédération des ACEF du Québec and, because of our structure and, I would say, because of our economic dependence as a community group, today, if the Fédération des ACEF took a stand for or against Québec's independence that would close I don't know how many sources of funds, grants, etc. Oh Yes! that's a reality. I have to tell you that we have shown our colours. We have said that we cannot take a position. To begin with, because people... First, it's important to realize that members of consumer groups are members at the regional level. There isn't a single individual who is a member of the Fédération des ACEF. That's important. Everything happens at the local level. And people who belong to a regional ACEF do so in the sense of belonging to a consumer group, dealing with consumer problems, and therefore not with broader, more political issues. That's why we said the Fédération cannot take a stand on Québec's constitutional future.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** With your permission, we will now take another question. Mrs. Blackburn or Mrs. Marois.

**Mrs. Marois:** Mr. Chairman, I'll begin. My colleague will continue afterward.  
(5:00 p.m.)

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

**Mrs. Marois:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I'd like to react to what you've just said. I feel democracy is ill-served if we draw conclusions like those you have drawn, because I think we are engaged in this exercise precisely so that this democracy will triumph and so that people can express themselves on what they would like to see as a blueprint for their future. Finally, I react very strongly because I'm very angry that anyone can imagine that's how things work.

Having said that, it's true that your brief can at times provoke anger but, since you are confronted with appalling situations in our society, poverty, unemployment, indebtedness, and so forth, it's perhaps not a bad thing that the anger evoked by your statements forces us to look at these phenomena, and together try to find some solutions. Essentially, I have two questions. First, you raise this desire for a better distribution of wealth, better social democracy, but you also raise the possibility of a full employment policy. You refer to the duplication of powers among the various levels of government. Does the conclusion that must be drawn to be able to implement a policy - let's call it an employment policy if we want to avoid the term full employment - does it not require that a single level of government be in a position to intervene in a number of sectors of our collective life, fully empowered to select the most appropriate tools to achieve its objective? The second question deals with a different area altogether. You, in fact, raise the issue of immigration policy. On page 15 of your brief, you raise an issue and say: "Can a host community that is not clearly aware of its existence, logically maintain that it can integrate new immigrants?" I don't want to put you in hot water unnecessarily, but don't you think that this question inevitably leads to the answer that the host community must have become aware of what it is and, especially, offer the new immigrant a clear structure in terms of the cultural choice he must make, the integration choice he must make?

**Mr. Goulet (Henri):** I'd like to formulate the beginnings of an answer to the first question anyway. I agree that the brief may provoke anger, but that is the stage that precedes cynicism. In other words, the phenomenon Québec is currently experiencing, and I don't

think more studies are needed to convince us that there is a serious problem in Québec, a serious problem of poverty. In 1990 alone, I know of no less than 20 studies, well done, upstanding, good studies on the reality of poverty. And the impression I have is that nobody in Québec society can deny that reality. Yet, at the program level, when it comes to acting to remedy this problem, which is socially disastrous for Québec, we have difficulty understanding or convincing people that, where we are in terms of fighting poverty, not fighting the poor, but fighting poverty, it doesn't work. Stage one: recognize the failure. Somebody said you don't build a democracy on a social volcano. There are serious problems that prevent people from seeing themselves in a blueprint for the future of Québec, because today's reality isn't secure. It's difficult to ask people to aspire to something better when today's reality isn't secure. So, I think that at that level, all the work that can be done to simplify programs, points of access and avenues to get there, so much the better, we want it and quickly.

Now for question two, concerning immigrants. To work with, to live, to meet at the level of services and people we serve, those of us in Montréal, the words it contains, the kind of story that has been made of comments we hear regularly: We don't understand you Quebecers. How is it - and I am quoting examples - that you want your own country? You're in the front line selling to the United States under free trade. Explain yourselves. How is it that you want to be a distinct society, and in the first major reform, on taxation, you team up with the feds? Do you realize the contortions you are asking of us to understand your proposal for a country? Secondly, what about the "tight mesh", the native-born Quebecer, the white-and-blue parade of June 25, what room is there in that for us? Does a society that doesn't exist... and we aren't saying that, historians, anthropologists, sociologists are, and clearly: A society that is not clearly aware of its existence will find it difficult to make room for foreigners, and disillusionment will set in on that score, in the Montréal region, if we fail to decide to make it a priority? That's why we have said that, as a prerequisite, democracy needs to take a new direction: trust the people, trust the population, listen to them, make room for them. A new direction at the social level is important. And the third priority mentioned in our brief is, in fact, the immigrant community, because there is an urgent need to begin listening to those people.

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

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question and I would also like to express

a wish. You have given us a very interesting expression of what could be the basis for a blueprint for society based on a strengthened identity, more harmonious integration of immigrants, joint action, social solidarity and a fight against poverty. You envisage a series of means ranging from a new tax system to greater political powers, economic powers and, yes, I'm getting to it, regional autonomy. You want to bring power closer to those governed by it. But you go quite far and, curiously enough, I had the impression that, if I followed you to the letter, you would almost turn the regions into sovereign states. Because you say, on page 11 of your brief, "make the administrative regions of Québec completely responsible". Completely responsible, that means holding all the powers for their social, economic, political and cultural development. As you know, however, the *gouvernement du Québec* cannot delegate powers it does not hold. Since, as you've noted, there's much costly duplication... This morning, in fact, the *Chambre de commerce* told us that of the 468 programs listed, 60% feature some degree of duplication between the federal government and the *gouvernement du Québec*. So, when you speak of completely responsible administrative regions, have you given any thought to what form that might take? What changes would have to be made to our political system? The wish I'd like to express, Mr. Chairman, is that while it is true that organizations have had little time to prepare themselves for the Commission, it might be desirable that they draft what could be the powers needed to carry out your proposal. A bit like Mrs. Bégin, my colleague of... was asking a few minutes ago. So, maybe from now till the end of our work, before the end of the Commission's work, they could submit a list of the main powers that would be needed to implement your blueprint for society.

**Mr. Goulet:** Well, on page 11 of our brief, one of the important aspects we stress is the responsibility of the regions. We considered the regionalization experiment currently under way or about to get under way with the *ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux*. For example, but without being able to comment further on that experiment... we think that the administration, the development of a country, a nation, a country like Québec, necessarily involves granting, decentralizing government and not only in terms of administration, but also political decentralization. So that means that examples such as what is currently going on, for instance, in certain regions of Québec - there is no need to name them - if they were actually given political power, administrative power, there are some priorities that they know much better than a central authority in Montréal or Québec City, or a central authority still farther away, that they could take control of this development

and this would avoid, as we mentioned, the incredible waste not only of money, but also of human resources, and on all counts at the level of public institutions as well. So that is...

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

**Mr. Goulet:** ...a first aspect that I feel is important, and that's why we mentioned it there. Working quietly to decentralize power at the level of the administration as a whole.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. We will now move to another question. Your time is up. We may come back toward the end, if we have a few minutes left. So, Jean-Claude Beaumier... And I may take the liberty, during the questions, to interrupt the person asking the question just to say: "You have so many minutes left, including the question and the answer". However, I certainly do not want to hurry your questions. It's a bit... we're somewhat at the mercy of our rules. Mr. Beaumier.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To begin with, Mrs. Hémond has answered part of my question, because the first part was: "Under what type of government would your interests be best served?" And you said that you did not want to state a preference. However, reading your brief - it's a bit of an occupational hazard since I've spent 26 years of my life serving children in distress and I see myself a little in the technocrat category - you say: "Tear down all technocratic hierarchies". I found that a bit hard, basically, and would like you to elaborate on that a little. I mean, every government is supported by technicians who help in designing legislation, who help in doing a host of necessary things and you want to break down all technocratic structures. Do you advocate a government by the people for the people? What is that? We are wondering.

**Mr. Goulet:** Not a bad idea!

**Mrs. Hémond:** Perhaps to provide some context for that part...

**A voice:** Good start!

**Mrs. Hémond:** To provide some context for that part... what struck us, since the brief was produced by seven or eight different people, with different texts, when we pooled our work, we realized that all the participants placed great importance in their text on the issue of the bureaucracy. We said to ourselves, Good God! Something is going on. So we tried to develop it a bit anyway. But we feel that... Are all powers necessary? we asked ourselves... I think it's a clear will to say... Earlier, we spoke of a gulf. I'm going to come back to that term... a gulf

between the world of bureaucracy and real problems. Then, I think the telling example... in any case, we've been working on this for a year, you know... the question of Bill 37, the Act respecting social aid, for example, where that legislation is completely at odds with people's everyday experience. We have superprograms, beautiful structures, everything is great, everything is well-organized, but in reality, it doesn't correspond at all to the reality of people. We've come up with all the solutions. Besides, in our society, there are lots of solutions. There's a solution for everything. The problem is... we feel it's still the issue of the Band-Aid approach. It's like people who think about something and apply a Band-Aid, except that sometimes, the problem is cancer. The Band-Aid doesn't work. Yes, there's a problem between bureaucracy, administrative decisions versus reality, as it is. And that's a problem people live with. Community groups and consumer groups live with it, but also... we're also cheek by jowl with the people we work with.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Rosette Côté, who is sitting in for Mrs. Lorraine Pagé.  
(5:15 p.m.)

**Mrs. Côté:** O.K., I understand that it's impossible for you to take a stand on the constitutional status of Québec. However, I thought I understood, in reading between the lines, that you're not satisfied with the status quo because you say economic development is not in harmony with the environment, which you state on page 21. I also understand that you say the blueprint for society must be based on - and the blueprint for the economy - some kind of logic that excludes nobody and reduces social disparities.

However, I'd like you to tell us... On page 16, you say that extensive public consultation will be needed. Which would initially cause your group to come forward. So, I have two questions: How could this public consultation be carried out? Second question: Are the basic guarantees you ask for concerning fundamental rights and a fair redistribution of wealth absolutely essential conditions for joining... regardless of the blueprint, or will you state your position regardless of these guarantees?

**Mrs. Arseneault:** In terms of public participation in defining the blueprint, the first part of your question, I feel it would have been very interesting had all the financial resources allocated for this Commission... Consideration could also have been given to holding hearings in the regions, parish halls, going to the people, not in places like this which are very intimidating. You can't imagine the stress it puts on us, coming before your Commission. I earn \$21 000 a year and I have two children.

Surely you can see that this is not my world, here. The entire protocol of the situation is too much for me.

So, if the process of public consultation were to take place, in places where people feel at ease, where they aren't stripped of their means, where they don't have to use big words, then perhaps people... Trust is needed. Quebecers are intelligent, they can state their views coherently, provided they are in circumstances where they feel at ease and where they feel they make a difference. Because, talking for no reason, talking and knowing that people aren't really listening and what you have to say won't be taken into account, won't be acted upon, that you don't really have influence, that only reinforces apathy.

It isn't certain that people are interested in the Commission's work because they tell themselves that if you go by what you read in the papers, that the commissioners, already, it's already a bit of a foregone conclusion, it's already slanted in favour of economic concerns, etc., based on what the editorials say, etc. But in addition to that, the protocol, the gulf between the House of Commons and the commissioners and the ordinary person on the street is so great that people are sceptical. We are sceptical of the impact of what we have to say and on whether our participation is relevant.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Allow me to say, Madam, that if you are intimidated, it doesn't show at all.

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

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

**Mr. Larose:** I think we appreciate the stress Mrs. Arsenault feels, but I would like her to imagine the stress I am under sitting between André Ouellet and Jean-Pierre Hogue...

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

**Mr. Larose:** ...to debate Québec's future.

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

**Mr. Ouellet:** You're well-protected.

**Mr. Larose:** So much the better, if you're feeling some. I've already been told that, because of my surroundings, I won't be able to go too far on this Commission. I'd say that your brief contains a blueprint for society and identifies some, I'd say, points of resistance, finally, in the democratic process to carry out this blueprint. Using language which, well, some organizations are very familiar with, in the labour movement, we are used to saying things

as directly as possible. The basic proposal, in fact, is that a plan is needed in Québec to renew the relations between citizen and state. Ultimately, that's quite something. What I find curious is that you find it difficult, maybe because of institutional constraints, maybe your organization really isn't in a position to develop a point of view on this, but it seems to me that when the goal is a new blueprint for relations between the state and citizens, then in fact you have to know, at the outset, where you are, what issue you're skirting, what instruments belong to us and which ones we don't have. In other words, the state has to be quite clearly defined and, if there are three, as you say, then the job is tripled.

A second point. What's missing, I'd say, in an organization like the FACEF, or in the ACEFs, at the local level, so that people realize that it is through the big issues, whether the repatriation of monetary policy, repatriation of manpower or immigration policy, etc., so that we can build a more legitimate alternative? What's missing in our approaches – and here, I'd say this isn't a question we can redirect just to the Commission, but to all our organizations – so that people take an active interest in politics because, ultimately, that's what we're concerned about, here, in this Commission. What do you people think is missing?

**Mr. Goulet:** A matter of \$100 000. In any event, I'd say that one way to approach the issue, and in a way that's what we tried to do and what we wanted, perhaps a little awkwardly, would be to state, as a first principle, our will to build a more democratic society. In our association, we have given a lot of thought to the issue of democracy and taking control, as I said in the presentation earlier. The problem is that we have experienced, in our societies – because my impression is that this isn't specific to Québec – a period in which the state is involved in everything, the state has decided to take charge of all problems or presumed to do so, to play that role, and perhaps we are suffering the consequences of its inability to make good.

Organizations like ours don't have an easy time looking for volunteers, looking for people to participate on committees, to provide assistance. Political parties don't find it easy to obtain volunteers, commitment, people willing to give their time for issues beyond the very specific, the very immediate, and my impression is that's the issue. Every day, through the services we provide, we come up against people's dependence on a kind of superstructure beyond their control, their feeling, finally, that they have no say in decisions.

It's in that sense that we also mentioned that it would be pleasant and interesting to try, slowly, gradually, to back up and say that power



has to be given back. Back to the grassroots, to the people; the impression that they have something to decide. For instance, and we mentioned this in the chapter on consultations, in Montréal, for four years now, we have experienced consultations of all kinds: good, bad, successful, failures. The important thing is that attempts are being made. For example, the lengthy consultation on the future of Mount Royal. The city had put forward a proposal; the public rejected it. I think things are starting to happen, in terms of consultation, namely that there are people who are putting proposals forward...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** O.K., I'll have to...

**Mr. Goulet:** ...and people can say no to that.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I must interrupt you and move to another question. I think you've made your point well. I'm sorry, but as I said earlier, we are somewhat at the mercy of the rules. However, I think your point is well taken. Mr. Dufour.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think Gérard Larose's expression, namely, where exactly does the Fédération place itself in terms of the "ice rink", is important because it orients the whole debate or the whole discussion.

In the second paragraph on page 7, I had chosen an "ice rink" but maybe it wasn't the right one. It's where you say: "The Fédération des ACEF has not taken a stand on the constitutional future of Québec. However, the Québec we want to build – and you define it and touch on everything; it's really everything, that's a government activity at either the federal or provincial level – cannot exist until we have repatriated all the powers needed to do so". I have the impression, there, that an "ice rink" has been chosen, to come back to that expression. Knowing a little of the perspective we are coming from, I have a lot of trouble with your brief because, I agree with some of it, but there are large parts... When, on page 20, you talk of the principles for a society, ultimately, which are the following: Elimination of waste in the public and private sectors... I think these principles are easily acceptable to everyone. Same thing for promoting the reduction at the source of goods, essentially, focusing on economic development that is in harmony with the environment... I think we all agree here. The problem is implementing it.

My question, without saying your brief is a pretext for raising a whole series of social problems, is the following. How would an even more centralized federal system, or a sovereign

Québec, solve your problems? Would you return before a Parliamentary Commission in a sovereign Québec to raise all these problems? I'm trying to see the connection you make.

**Mrs. Hémond:** O.K., I can answer part of that. The connection we make, I think it's been expressed in all kinds of ways, is that, one, we couldn't, for various reasons, take a position on the constitutional future except that we were also coming to tell you – we have said this from the outset and I think everyone was aware of it – that we came with a different message, different in the sense that it's the dominant message at present, not only here with the Commission, but with society in general, a dominant economic message. That's what we are talking about. And we've said, yes, in fact, we've used, perhaps as you say, the pretext, but our participation in this Commission is to say to everyone here that, yes, there is an economic aspect but that, yes, there are choices as well, a new social direction to be taken. And basically, perhaps, we are the ones who will bring that message to you.

In that sense, perhaps we resemble a "skater", maybe this resembles "skating", but I think we have stop harping on something that I, at least, feel is important. We have to stop saying you are "skating"; you've found a pretext for coming. Yes. I'll answer. Yes, perhaps we used a pretext, but that's important because Québec's future, as we see it, doesn't involve just an economic or constitutional model, but also societal choices, choices that we feel involve an urgent need for a new social direction. We're in danger of totally losing that dimension and, basically, our message is that something has to be done, because it's just not working any more. There's an obvious deterioration in the general quality of life and we want to say to you that there can be no official answer at the constitutional level to what we can contribute to this debate. But we can at least have a few questions that we want raised and say that we have to take charge and that's the more social aspect. Basically, that's the contribution of the Fédération des ACEF in that area.

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

**Mr. Turgeon:** Yes, we're almost finished. So, I'll be very brief, Mr. Chairman. I would like to say that I fully understand the argument. I have no problems with what is written in the brief, but rather with what is not written. I note that this is the second brief presented today by two very different social groups, the Chambre de commerce and yourselves, and neither has gotten to the bottom of things. Now this Commission has a very specific mandate, which is precisely

to get to the bottom of things. If we continue like this, I think we'll have a serious problem. What I said yesterday, and what I fear, is that we have to interpret silence on occasion. And that indicates, perhaps, that we do not live in a truly free society.

Having said that, I simply want to say one thing. You are at home here. This is yours and, when all is said and done, you will have the last word on Québec's future. That's all I have to say, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. I believe there is a little time left. Does anyone else have a question? Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Hogue:** I have read your report and I note that you mention Canada neither in the summary nor in the body of the report or your brief. I do not...

**Mr. Larose:** You're obsessed, Jean-Pierre!

**Mr. Hogue:** We're very close, aren't we? Well, to each his obsession. I have mine, Mr. Larose, and your diagnosis is accurate. You must have some of your own. I don't want to waste time. Does repatriating all the powers necessary at the administrative, economic and political levels to carry out a blueprint for society in Québec mean that Québec must separate from Canada? Regardless of what my colleague and friend Mr. Larose might think, I ask this question not because of my old-timer's obsessions, but because of the head I have and the past I have lived. I come from Montréal, from Outremont, from a family that has been in this country for 12 generations...

**A voice:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Hogue:** Well, you know, you have to represent somebody in this world and they have rights just like everybody else. So, I'm speaking to you as a Canadian, a Quebecer, like you and me. Does that mean... And if, Mr. Turgeon, people say there were common silences...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Hogue, you said earlier that you wanted to be told when your time was up.

**Mr. Hogue:** Yes, that's right.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Could you state your question quickly?

**Mr. Hogue:** Does that mean that Québec must separate from the rest of Canada? Please answer briefly so that I can ask a related question.

**Mrs. Hémond:** We've already answered. We

won't answer that question.

**Mr. Hogue:** Fine.

**Mrs. Hémond:** I want to say, I think that we've been saying the same thing for an hour. I don't think we can answer you. So, you'll have to live with our silence...

**Mrs. Arsenault:** I'd like to add something. Regardless of the flag's colour, blue or red, it's the container and the content that interest us. O.K.? If independence changes nothing, what benefit is there in independence if it just perpetuates the same rules of the game?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Do you believe Québec has all the means to combat unemployment? Tell me, for instance... We haven't talked about the Bank of Canada. Are you fed up with interest rates? Are you disturbed that interest rates are set by the Bank of Canada, taking the entire economy into account?

**Mrs. Arsenault:** It doesn't have all the powers at present. It doesn't have all the powers.

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

**A voice:** I just wanted to mention...

**Mr. Chevette:** Mr. Chairman, I was going to say, you have chosen not to answer because of constraints, you said. If we said to you that the constraints do not exist, would you answer?

**Mrs. Arsenault:** The constraints exist, Mr. Chevette.

**Mrs. Hémond:** We won't answer that.

**Mrs. Arsenault:** They are there, Mr. Chevette. It's a question...

**Mrs. Hémond:** A very pointed question.

**Mrs. Arsenault:** It's a question of survival for the community movement.

**Mr. Hogue:** I have to say that the question I asked has been answered. I am satisfied with the answer you have given, Madam...

**Mrs. Arsenault:** Thank you.

**Mr. Hogue:** ...and it's a good one. I think you've given me a good answer.

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

**Mrs. Arsenault:** ...answer the colour of the flag?

**Mrs. Hémond:** No, the container.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Unfortunately, the hour is up. Thank you for taking the time to write your brief. We appreciate the implications. Thank you also for having taken the time to come here to discuss it and, as Mr. Turgeon said, "You're at home here". Unfortunately, perhaps the atmosphere... But, you know, if you were to come a second time, it would be much easier.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** However, I believe you have forced us to reflect more deeply and, speaking for myself, I feel you should continue. For you, it's a job to be carried out and you should not give up. I think you will force us to be intimidated, perhaps much more than yourselves. So, I thank you.

**Voices:** Thank you.

**Mrs. Hémond:** Thank you, good evening everyone.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Members of the Commission, we will resume at 7:30 p.m., with the Canadian Manufacturers' Association.

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

(Proceedings resumed at 7:35 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Ladies and gentlemen of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, we have two briefs this evening. The first is by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and the second, at 9:00 p.m., that of the Conseil de la vie française.

One hour and thirty minutes have been allotted to the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and, for the benefit of our guests, I will repeat that during a period of 30 minutes (sic), the time is divided as follows, between members of the Commission and our guests: 10 minutes to present the brief, 10 minutes for the chair, 15 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the government, 15 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Opposition, and finally, 40 minutes for members registered with the chair, prior to your speaking.

I want to welcome the gentlemen of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. I'll now ask Mr. Fortier to introduce his colleagues to the Commission.

### Canadian Manufacturers' Association (Québec Division)

**Mr. Fortier (André):** Thank you Mr. Chairman. Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Québec division of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, I would like to thank you for allowing us to present our views on the political and constitutional future of Québec.

First of all, let me introduce our delegation, which includes, to my left, Robert D. Murray, our ex-officio chairman and consultant for the IIDC, formerly the ICI. Mr. Murray is also chairman of the Hydrogen Industry Council of Canada. To my far right, Claude Rivard, president and general manager of WIC Inc. Mr. Rivard is also president of the Association des fabricants de machinerie agricole du Québec. To my immediate right is Richard Le Hire, vice-president and general manager of the Québec division of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. I am André Fortier, first vice-president of Noranda and, since last June, chairman of the board of directors of the Québec division of the CMA.

Before turning the microphone over to our vice-president and general manager, I would like to point out that the position presented here today has been prepared at the request of our board of directors and has received the unanimous approval of our executive. It was also presented to the national board of the CMA, which found this position to be in keeping with the message the CMA has been trying to spread throughout Canada, a message contained in the manifesto entitled "The Aggressive Economy; Daring to Compete." Finally, I am pleased to tell you that the Québec division of the CMA has taken steps to become known as the Québec Manufacturers' Association, while remaining a division of the CMA. This step has been approved by a working group and will soon be submitted to members with a recommendation for approval from the national board of directors. I will now give the floor to Mr. Le Hire who, following his presentation, will answer your questions with help from our delegation as necessary. Thank you.

**Mr. Le Hire (Richard):** Following the failure of the Meech Lake Accord and confronted with profound changes, both political and economic, worldwide, the question of the place Québec will or will not occupy within the Canadian confederation must be added to all the other concerns of manufacturers, who are already wondering about the ability of Canada, and of Québec, to provide an institutional framework within which they can grow and prosper for their own benefit and for the benefit of the areas in which they are developing.

The CMA hopes its presentation will make the Commission aware of the context within

which manufacturers are currently developing, of the risks and challenges they face and of what they need to continue playing an important role in fostering our collective prosperity. As for political structures per se, manufacturers feel that any meaning they have is based solely on the realities they define.

Our brief is summarized in several chapters. In the first chapter, we review certain economic realities and conclude that Canada's situation, and Québec's of course, when examined in its broader context over the last 30 years, has deteriorated, and how Canada's ability to compete compared to other industrialized countries has rapidly eroded over the past 10 years. It then looks at how this situation has manifested itself in Québec. Following this is a chapter which deals with the manufacturing sector as the driving force behind economic growth. Of course, you will understand that we wished to stress its importance in job creation, not only at the production level, but also, because of spillover into the service industry, in maintaining a positive balance of trade and in generating increased productivity.

The brief then examines government action over the last few years and the problems we are facing. We focus, in particular, on the national debt, which is a burden with serious ramifications on the competitiveness of Canadian and Québec industry.

Following this, we look at the choices before us and, in fact, considering all the problems we have identified, it is not difficult to conclude that the existing system of government, and the manner in which it operates, cannot ensure our growth and prosperity in the short, medium or long term. The CMA, therefore, fully supports those calling for changes. However, the big question is knowing what changes.

When we examine all the structural options open to us, we only become discouraged and impatient. Discouraged because the debate has been so badly handled. Before resolving the question of how, we need to look at why. What we need to know is the social context within which our development will be occurring and what place that society will give industrial priorities. However, no one has yet put forward a vision of the future, whether it be within a context of current federalism, renewed federalism, any type of Canadian economic community, sovereignty-association between Québec and the rest of Canada, or even one of Québec's outright independence.

As for our impatience, it can be attributed to two factors. On the one hand, we have time to make up for and have seen ourselves fall further and further behind over the past few years; on the other, the time we are wasting debating what form our government should take has distracted us from our priorities and adds to our uncertainty.

A rapid examination of parliamentary political structures reveals that the manufacturing sector can grow and prosper no matter what form the government takes. This is why the real question is not what type of relationship will Canada and Québec have with one another, but rather what vision of the future are we being offered.

The Québec industrial community's participation in any constitutional reform, of any magnitude, is thus secondary to examining the blueprint for society it provides. If this blueprint allows Québec industrialists to develop their competitive capacity so that they can secure their place on world markets, to their advantage, then this is the option we would favour over another not offering the same prospects.

To reach such a point, people with differing views will have to recognize the role of the manufacturing sector as a driving force in the economy and promote growth; we will have to recognize the devastating impact of our huge deficit and take the necessary steps to reduce it to a level the international community feels we can manage and still remain a credible industrial power; we will have to recognize that we will only succeed in maintaining an enviable place in the world and become competitive again if we manage to make the transition from industries based on our rich natural resources to those based on know-how and high added-value, and implement monetary, financial and fiscal policies which will encourage the investment needed to restructure our industrial base; we will have to recognize the importance of human resources in this transition and work at reforming our educational system so that it responds more quickly and effectively to economic imperatives; we will have to recognize that protecting the environment and controlling existing pollution requires financial input by every member of society, which can be accomplished only if we maintain and improve our ability to foster prosperity and adopt environmental policies which do not compromise this ability; we will have to recognize that our performance on world markets has become crucial as we round out the century, and develop and use efficient support networks for industrial activity, as well as encourage the distribution and use of new technologies.

Beyond this, the Québec division of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association believes that any constitutional reform process in which we take part would also have to protect our assets. Therefore, there would be no question of our becoming involved in a process which would result in an economic loss for Québec, or a weakening of our ability to foster prosperity.

Among the assets upon which we must continue to be able to count is access to the Canadian market. As much as our members would like to see a continental free trade zone, they

feel it is necessary to ensure such a zone exists within Canada. In fact, there is a good argument for dismantling a whole series of non-tariff barriers existing between the provinces. It is incomprehensible that the whole Canadian political class, even considering the current state of affairs in Québec, cannot perceive how ridiculous it would be to reach a point where there would be more trade restrictions on goods and services moving between the different regions of Canada than on those moving between the different regions of Canada and the United States. Even assuming that Québec does achieve greater political autonomy, despite this, we would still have to seek greater economic integration with the rest of Canada since the objective is to be as accessible as possible to as many markets as possible. Logic and common sense dictate that we start with the closest ones and the ones with which we have the most in common.

As concerns the possibility of maintaining the current structure of the monetary policy, we must first ask ourselves if all regions of Canada share the same economic objectives. We must then ensure that those in charge of administering the monetary policy do not find themselves, due to their unlimited spending powers which could increase the national debt, in a situation compromising regional economic development objectives.

Finally, we must remember that time is against us. If we have to change anything at all in the relationship between Canada and Québec, it should be done quickly and the problem given a long-term solution. If, after two, five or even ten years, large segments of the population want to re-examine the system, the work of this Commission will have been for naught. The restructuring of our industrial capacity will require investments of such magnitude that returns can only be calculated over a long period, about 25 years. If the rules of the game are likely to undergo major changes along the way, how can decisions be made? It is therefore essential that any recommendation made by the Commission be very widely acceptable so that the cloud of uncertainty that has been hanging over the future of Québec and the rest of Canada can be lifted.

As stated earlier, not only do we have a lost time to make up for, but it has once again become imperative that we devote all our attention to economic priorities. The recession in which we now find ourselves only reinforces the importance of doing so. Once again, let us take the trouble to look and see what is occurring elsewhere. In ten months, the Berlin wall has fallen, the communist world has foundered, Germany, divided in two for 45 years, has begun its economic and political reunification. It is in a position to become, in five years, the greatest industrial power in the world; it will, of course,

benefit from the prosperity that accompanies this status. What about Canada and Québec, where will we be?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you Mr. Le Hire. We will now begin the question period with Mr. Serge Deschamps, who is sitting in for Mr. Jacques Proulx.

**Mr. Deschamps:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I find your position extremely interesting except that, at least to me, the ideas you presented are too abstract to get a clear picture of what position you are favouring. On the one hand, you have outlined certain weaknesses or problems which Québec must overcome; on the other, I am not exactly clear on how the existing federal structure, supposing that is the model you favour, could correct the current problems you have identified in the model we have been using since Confederation.

**Mr. Le Hire:** First of all, it should be clear from our presentation that we are not supporting any model before seeing what vision each of the models favours. If we see a model that takes the priorities we have identified into account and that creates the type of environment we would like to see, in the interest, in our opinion, of the population as a whole, then we will be able to take a position in favour of or against one of the models.

**Mr. Deschamps:** Are there areas of jurisdiction which you see as being the responsibility of one level of government or the other?

**Mr. Le Hire:** We have, after careful deliberation, avoided becoming involved in discussions about the mechanics of the constitution. We believe that far too much time has already been devoted to such questions, and that other organizations have covered them quite thoroughly; I am thinking, among others, of the Chambre de commerce du Québec. We are not prepared to make a contribution which would be different from theirs in terms of the jurisdiction of one level of government or the other, and I do not think that it would be useful to us at the moment.

**Mr. Laberge:** You're open.

**Mr. Le Hire:** Completely.

**Mr. Laberge:** To the highest bidder.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** All right, Mr. Deschamps? Mr. Roger Nicolet.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Le Hire, upon reading your brief, I can

understand that, for you, the concept of the model of society which will result from this exercise in which we are participating is of crucial importance. This is understandable. On the other hand, you will understand that, from a broader outlook, society as a whole will ask itself the same type of question and, upon reading your brief, there are certain aspects of the reference criteria to which you allude which, I believe, need to be clarified. I will now read, on page 43 of your brief, under "conclusions", of which I will briefly cite two. At the bottom of page 43: "To recognize the devastating impact of the huge deficit with which we are burdened and to commit ourselves to adopting the necessary measures to reduce it to a proportion the international community will judge that we are more capable of assuming." And on the following page, also at the bottom: "To recognize that protecting the environment and controlling current pollution levels require, on the part of society as a whole, a financial contribution which cannot be made unless we maintain and step up our ability to foster prosperity, and to commit ourselves to adopting environmental policies which do not threaten such ability."

It seems to me that, in both cases, you are referring to relative criteria, and that it is part of the commonly accepted view of society's values that indeed, in these two very different cases... we are relying increasingly on scales and objective criteria, both as concerns our ability to absorb the deficit and environmental issues. Would you please comment on these two points?

**Mr. Le Hire:** I am not certain I understand the meaning of your question. We could discuss, for example, the matter of the deficit, and I think that we now clearly recognize the impact this deficit is having on our ability to compete. Our ability to compete is our ability to foster prosperity, which we must maintain at all costs. As for our position with regard to the environment, it is also linked to our ability to foster prosperity.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Mr. Le Hire, it seems to me that a society's ability to shoulder a burden of debt is truly something which is quantifiable, measurable and which can be expressed using exact figures, percentages or otherwise, comparison with the gross national product... some sort of scale. I would have liked you to be more specific, rather than basing the issue on how the international community perceives our problem. Does your view of the situation not include a threshold or the Canadian economy's capacity to assume or absorb a financial burden such as our debt? Secondly, the other - I have lumped the two together because it is easier for me - indeed, they are two separate issues, but in terms of quality of life and protection of our

environment, it appears that a growing number of our fellow citizens and society in general are expecting groups like yours, and us in our capacity as "environment police", to take much more specific and decisive action on environmental issues. And people expect us - I am thinking both of ourselves and of the industries you represent - to be able to define the rules of the game clearly and precisely for the public.

**Mr. Le Hire:** Well, as concerns the issue of the deficit, of course there exist generally accepted measures, but it must nevertheless be understood that our goal in compiling this brief was to emphasize the importance of globalization and the interrelated characteristics currently displayed by the various national economies. And, in the general opinion of the international community in which we are currently developing, our economy is suffering, and International Monetary Fund authorities have even stated that it is in danger of "Argentinization." Therefore, it is only natural that this variable be measured on a relative basis. Of course, objective results can be achieved, but their true measure will be in how others perceive us.

As concerns our remark on the environment, it must be understood that we already endorse the objective of sustainable development, and that we feel it is absolutely essential that a balance - a true balance - be struck between industrial activity and environmental protection. Our current fear is that the priorities or schedule of those seeking to improve environmental quality disregard the aspect of industrial development. The only thing we ask is that more realistic criteria be used.

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

**Mr. Dufour:** Mr. Chairman, I would first like to apologize to our CMA colleagues; I was detained in another meeting. I have a question concerning what appears on page 45. In addition to what has been discussed previously, I feel that the CMA brief is a full-fledged economic report. I am pleased to see that economics are discussed therein. The CMA division feels that any constitutional reform process to which we commit ourselves should also guarantee protection of our assets. I think this is patently clear and in keeping with the Prime Minister's June message, in which he emphasized the importance of maintaining our assets and of protecting and improving Quebecers' standard of living.

I would like you to comment further on the second sentence. There is no question of committing ourselves to a process which would result in Québec's economic decline or reduced potential to foster prosperity. Considering that,

when all is said and done, manufacturers are the true creators of jobs...I would like you to comment further on this.

**Mr. Le Hire:** Well, it appears clear to me. Given that our objective is to be competitive and assume our rightful place on the international scene, our obvious priority must be the economy. Our request is simple: that our assets be protected, and that no action be taken which might threaten our potential to foster prosperity.

**Mr. Dufour:** May I?

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

**Mr. Dufour:** A suggestion appeared in the Chambre de commerce brief, tabled this morning. I realize that you are the Québec division of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. We discussed the interest rate policy and certain central bank policies which create problems because action must often be taken in the interests of a given region in Canada, with the result that the other regions suffer. At one point there was to be a reconstitution of the central bank, with regional representation. In this global decentralization approach outlined in the CMA brief, is this something, a proposal you could agree on, such as greater regional participation in the management of the Canadian monetary policy?

**Mr. Le Hire:** I believe we touched on this very point on page 46 of our brief, if you will permit me to repeat: "As for the possibility of maintaining the current structure of the monetary policy, we must first ask ourselves if all regions of Canada share the same economic objectives. We must then ensure that those in charge of administering the monetary policy do not find themselves, due to their unlimited spending powers which could increase the national debt, in a situation compromising regional economic development objectives." Thus, it is clear, according to us, that if we were to endorse a system where we participate in establishing the monetary policy, Québec's economic development priorities would definitely have to be taken into account.

**Mr. Dufour:** That's what I thought I read. I just wanted you to repeat it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Lucien Bouchard.  
(8:00 p.m.)

**Mr. Bouchard:** Mr. Le Hire, we have been sitting on this Commission for a day now, hearing three briefs. Yours is the third brief we have heard, and I can see that your group, like

the two preceding it, will refuse to discuss the type of reform you feel is needed. It is rather discouraging, in this light, to have created a Commission such as this one. Your group is an important one. Like the groups preceding you, you are attuned to the country's economic activity. Now, when all this is over, we are still going to be asked to formulate a recommendation, and I am among those who hope to have some input into this recommendation. For example, we know that everyone has certain opinions; I would not call them prejudices, but opinions, because we are each the result of our personal experiences. And we all rely on a sort of personal chemistry to come into play among ourselves and influence the input of those who come before us to say what they think. My question is the following: Do you not think that an association such as yours which, naturally, has immediate economic interests, immediate financial and commercial interests which we understand and which are completely legitimate, could also have a vision of our society, of the future? Especially since you have handed down such a severe judgment of the country's economy. You have also severely judged the decision-making authorities which have forced us into this stagnation which you deplore and which exists, as we know full well. Shouldn't you, then, go a step further and tell us what is causing this stagnation and the action to be taken to change the status quo?

**Mr. Le Hire:** I think this has, in fact, been done. Obviously, you would like it to be presented as a constitutional option.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Not necessarily an option, but you could tell us, for example... You mentioned an overlapping at one point.

**Mr. Le Hire:** Yes.

**Mr. Bouchard:** You blame overlapping jurisdictions. Well, you could say: Listen, this is what must be sorted out; this is where the overlapping must stop. These are the powers which must be repatriated by Québec, for example, if such is the case. These are the type of comments which would help us.

**Mr. Le Hire:** Yes. But I also told you, a few minutes ago, that this work has already been carried out by other associations, that the Chambre de commerce has done excellent work in this respect, and that we felt that nothing could be added in our brief. But beyond this, I think that what must be understood is that what interests us first and foremost is having the opportunity to speak out on fostering prosperity. There is no doubt that the very dynamism of the federal system governing us is of a redistributive nature, and that this dynamic,

combined with the rhetoric of redistribution of wealth which we have witnessed over the past 40 years, has accelerated or increased the impact of the redistributive dynamic of the entire system, and that we are currently faced with serious problems because the focus is no longer on fostering prosperity. Accompanying our delegation is Mr. Claude Rivard, CEO of a thriving small business which exports a considerable proportion of its production. I think it is worthwhile for you to hear his outlook on the problem.

**Mr. Rivard (Claude):** I am sure you understand, Mr. Bouchard, that our job is to manufacture products and sell the greatest quantity possible. And in this debate, I think that is what we are essentially targeting, and this is what I tell my collaborators and employees... I try to convince them and I think I have succeeded because, despite the recession, our growth rate this year is holding steady at 20%. We already export to eight countries and we just signed our first contract with the USSR. But I try to convince them to share my future vision of a market which is becoming increasingly global. To succeed, one must have what I call the "drive", the motivation and the support enabling us to assume risks, be creative, and thus to confront these challenges. And it is already very complicated for us to maintain through... - because nothing's free on the international markets, as you know - to maintain this vision, this concern. So, what we are asking in this debate is: Is it possible to define a framework which would encourage us to exceed ourselves, to be more skilful than anyone else? On this issue, you can count on us. I feel that in Québec we have proven that we have an enormous amount of talent. And, in my humble opinion, my sector of activity, the agricultural sector, is primed to assume an important position. And my aim is nothing less than to make Québec number one on the world market in agricultural machinery, in a specific area rather than in tillage implements. This, then, is what we need and what we are seeking in particular, this framework which will enable us to grow and acquire a taste for entrepreneurship. And it's not strictly an entrepreneur's issue; it's also a question of solidarity with our employees, because we need them.

**Mr. Bouchard:** In other words, first of all... May I, Mr. Chairman?

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

**Mr. Bouchard:** ...first of all, you have no preconceived notion of the political framework which should exist. What you ask of this future framework is that it implement economic policies enabling you to make progress and eliminate the

obstacles you have discussed here today. In other words, for example, a sovereign Québec, but one which would become aware of its responsibilities as concerns economic and trade accessibility to the world, and which would implement policies targeting this result... wouldn't this get you worked up?

**Mr. Le Hire:** If, indeed, the political structure allowed us the dynamism necessary to enable us to assert ourselves on the international markets, such a change would require some adaptation, and the resulting advantages would have to outweigh the disadvantages, because any type of change always includes some drawbacks. But if this were the case, and we could not see the same potential for dynamism in the proposed structure, we would definitely make our choice. In fact, this is already happening in some places. I have with me a newspaper clipping of an article which appeared in the **Winnipeg Free Press**. The headline reads: "Firms quietly leaving Canada" (Des entreprises quittent discrètement le Canada). Another...

**Mr. Bouchard:** Excuse me, what was that?

**Mr. Le Hire:** Des entreprises quittent discrètement le Canada.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Discrètement.

**Mr. Le Hire:** Here, "Canadian companies quietly packing up and moving out" (Des entreprises canadiennes se préparent discrètement à quitter le pays et à s'établir à l'extérieur), from the Edmonton Journal. And why, basically, is this happening? When we look at it, it is simply because we do not show the same dynamism, we are not competitive, and the firms can do better elsewhere, because the framework allows more dynamism.

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

**Mr. Bouchard:** All right.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Neill Cameron, who is sitting in for Mr. Richard Holden.

**Mr. Cameron:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to thank you for your brief. Je voudrais commencer par faire un commentaire sur l'importance de l'activité industrielle au Canada qui pourrait s'avérer utile à la Commission. Cette année, le magazine **Business Week** a examiné les 1000 premières entreprises au monde en importance et a déterminé leur valeur économique au moyen de la méthode de la capitalisation des bénéfices; il ne s'agissait pas exclusivement d'entreprises de fabrication, mais il



y en avait un grand nombre parmi elles. La valeur totale de ces entreprises a été estimée à 6,75 milliards de dollars. Les entreprises japonaises représentent 39 % de cette somme, les entreprises américaines, 34 %, suivies des autres. La valeur des entreprises canadiennes est de 2 %, soit environ la même que celles de l'Italie et de la Suisse. Quant aux entreprises du Québec, elles représentent environ 0,5 %. On pourrait donc conclure que les entreprises québécoises seules ont considérablement moins de poids que l'ensemble des entreprises du Canada.

La question que j'adresse à l'Association des manufacturiers est la suivante. J'ai l'impression, après avoir entendu votre mémoire, que ce que vous dites, en réalité, c'est que les conclusions auxquelles la Commission arrivera ne vous importent pas vraiment, en autant qu'il n'y ait pas de changements trop importants. Toutefois, on peut supposer par ailleurs que l'une des raisons pour lesquelles nous nous retrouvons en si grand nombre ici aujourd'hui, c'est que tout le monde croit que nous allons accomplir quelque chose de très important. En d'autres mots, si l'une des choses que vous désirez est une garantie que vous continuerez d'avoir accès au marché canadien, par exemple, alors s'il se produit un très léger changement sur le plan constitutionnel, il semble très probable que vous continuerez d'y avoir accès et qu'il n'y aurait pas de changement sur ce point.

Par ailleurs, s'il se produisait un changement politique très important – la proclamation de la souveraineté, par exemple, qui entraînerait la création d'un nouveau genre d'État québécois – même si cela se faisait à l'amiable, de façon ordonnée et sans aucune détérioration des relations entre le nouvel État québécois et le reste du Canada, il serait probable, du moins on le voit partout dans les politiques démocratiques, que l'accès au marché québécois des manufacturiers du reste du Canada et l'accès des manufacturiers québécois au marché canadien seraient restreints, non par des barrières officielles, mais par des mécanismes comme la politique des partenaires économiques du Québec déjà en vigueur ici. Voulez-vous exprimer votre opinion sur ce sujet?

**M. Le Hire:** Disons d'abord que nous croyons que les entreprises de fabrication du Québec doivent continuer d'avoir accès au marché canadien de la même façon que nous avons réussi à avoir accès au marché américain et de la même façon que nous espérons avoir accès au marché mexicain, si jamais le Canada et les États-Unis concluent un accord. Nous n'avons pas nécessairement le même système politique que les États-Unis ou le Mexique, et nous croyons que la signature d'accords qui ouvrent les marchés devient chose courante dans le

commerce international d'aujourd'hui. Nous estimons également qu'il serait dans l'intérêt de tous les manufacturiers canadiens, et non seulement des manufacturiers québécois, de maintenir le libre-échange entre les provinces. Nous affirmons même que les échanges actuels ne sont pas aussi importants qu'ils devraient l'être et que même si nous vivons dans une fédération depuis 100 ans, nous n'avons pas encore réussi à établir entre nous un genre de marché commun qui nous aurait permis d'être plus concurrentiels. Il y a plusieurs exemples de cet état de choses dans le secteur industriel, la fabrication de la bière étant sûrement l'exemple auquel nous songeons tous en premier.

**M. Cameron:** Je suis entièrement d'accord avec cela, mais cela ne constitue qu'une partie de mon argument. Il n'est même pas nécessaire que les gouvernements provinciaux, par exemple un gouvernement néo-démocrate, soulèvent la question. Même les gouvernements provinciaux qui se sont dits assez conservateurs en matière d'économie politique ou orientés vers le libre-échange ont laissé des barrières tarifaires s'ériger au cours des décennies ou en ont créé de nouvelles, simplement parce que cela constituait une mesure politique qui avait la faveur du public à ce moment, indépendamment de la ligne de pensée générale de la province.

J'affirme donc que si nous poursuivons dans ce sens, en d'autres mots si nous avons un Québec souverain et un Canada qui, sans le Québec, peut se considérer comme un bloc, alors – et toute notre expérience politique l'indique – cet état de choses va sûrement continuer. Nous n'avons même pas besoin du NPD pour illustrer cela.

**M. Le Hire:** Je crois que nous ne pouvons pas faire de commentaires sur ce point précis, mais je vais demander à mon collègue Bob Murray de ...

**M. Fortier:** I certainly understood the question. Mais il y a une chose que je voudrais préciser. La cruelle réalité de la vie économique est que nous, les manufacturiers, souhaitons avoir un plus grand accès à tous les marchés. Nous devons obtenir l'accès à ces marchés en devenant concurrentiels sur le plan de la qualité, sur le plan des prix et de la livraison, et sur de nombreux autres aspects qui nous permettront de rendre nos produits concurrentiels sur l'ensemble du marché. The only way we can be internationally competitive is if the governments who determine les règles du jeu pour le secteur industriel, que ce soit en matière de protection de l'environnement ou dans d'autres domaines, comprennent notre point de vue, et si nous coopérons avec eux dans un esprit d'équipe, nous augmenterons la richesse du Québec. C'est ce que

nous voulons dire. Merci.

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

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, I read your brief very carefully and it seems to me that what you are advocating are new orientations in government policies rather than new constitutional structures. I would even go so far as to say that there is a bit of jockeying in your presentation since, at one point, you more or less say that you would go with the highest bidder.

Am I wrong? Are you truly seeking an economic context which would be satisfactory to you and meet your needs more fully rather than profound constitutional change?

**Mr. Le Hire:** We clearly said that structures are only as good as the blueprints on which they are based. We concluded that we were not satisfied with the blueprint for federalism as it exists today. We indicated the means which will enable us to demonstrate the dynamism which we consider necessary in order to take our place on the international scene and foster the prosperity to which we believe we can all lay claim for everyone's greatest good.  
(8:15 p.m.)

This observation is true not only for Québec, but also for the rest of Canada. In this regard, the brief which we prepared corresponds in every way to the content of the message which our association has been conveying for a year now regarding the importance of building an aggressive economy. Because there is competition between the governments. If there were an order of government which found the means, through the degree of consensus which can exist in government, by which it could develop, to take the initiative for and guarantee this dynamism, we would be... We don't even have to say it.

It's clear. As I demonstrated to you earlier, it's already happening. When we don't demonstrate dynamic qualities, companies go elsewhere because opportunities are better. If we demonstrate dynamic qualities, companies come. Why? Because our structure enables them to be creative, to develop and to contribute to the fostering of prosperity.

**Mr. Ouellet:** However, the fact remains - and I'm quoting here - that you state on page 11 of your brief that we live in a period of globalization and interdependence. Interdependence inevitably leads to overlapping, be it at the domestic or the international level. Can I conclude, upon reading your brief, that you are advocating greater joint action and policy uniformity between the orders of government? And do you have any specific mechanisms to

suggest for how to attain this goal of greater coordination of efforts between the governments of Québec and Canada?

**Mr. Le Hire:** Basically, the important thing is to find out how we will be able to foster prosperity. When we look at models from around the world, we realize that there are more than just one. The important thing is that these models are approved by the people, that they are viable and that they work.

If for any reason the model chosen imposes constraints or limitations which prevent dynamism from manifesting itself, it is not a good model, regardless of what it's called.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** All right, Mr. Ouellet? Okay, next speaker, Mr. Marcel Beaudry.

**Mr. Beaudry (Marcel):** On page 34 of your brief, you state: "Thus it is that Québec's corporate tax policy is now the most competitive in Canada." Then you add: "But we must display as much intelligence with respect to other fields such as the environment." Are we to understand that it's your opinion that the government's environmental legislation should be less stringently enforced on manufacturers, that this is the price we must pay for making your goods competitive, or should we interpret this in another way?

**Mr. Le Hire:** No, it should be interpreted in another way. We must see that, with regard to the environment, as with every other sector, Québec also looks at what others are doing before taking action. However, a certain number of realities must be considered. We do business with industrialized countries. Often, these countries have a 150-year industrial history. Their populations are much denser than ours. They have smaller territories than ours. And you are the first to dash off for a vacation in those countries when the opportunity presents itself. That's because the quality of life and the environment are not so bad.

When standards are imposed on Québec industries that exceed those of their industrial competitors, how shall I say it, it becomes an obstacle to competitiveness.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you. You have told me exactly what I asked you in this case. If they exceed those of competitors in other countries, if our laws are stricter than those of other countries, you have justified my interpretation of your sentence.

**Mr. Le Hire:** I'm sorry. Perhaps I'm the one who misunderstood. I originally thought that you were strictly dealing with law

enforcement...

**A voice:** Oh! No, no.

**Mr. Le Hire:** ...and not the content of the laws themselves.

**A voice:** That's it.

**Mr. Murray:** We must not interpret this to mean that we are not aware that there have been abuses in the past and that the manufacturing industry is attempting to correct these abuses. It's a fact that every day we see the manufacturing industry trying to correct these abuses and everyone, especially our association, is very concerned and is studying this problem. We have a highly active committee on the environment and we often work jointly with the Ministère de l'Environnement du Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Gerald Larose, you have the floor. Did you ask for it?

**Mr. Larose:** No, this is for the other group.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That's fine.

**Mr. Larose:** He gave it to me...

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

**A voice:** Yield the floor.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Listen, I have your name on my list. If you want to take the floor, go ahead.

**A voice:** If you are understood.

**Mr. Larose:** O.K., a quick question. Can you give us, say, not feelings, but results on the consultations you are conducting in your field regarding the desired changes to the existing rules of the game? Do people in fact think that things must change?

**A voice:** We indeed clearly state that we are not in favour of the status quo. It can't be any clearer than that.

**Mr. Larose:** Yes. But it seems to me that I read somewhere that you conducted surveys, or you had someone determine what people want, and this morning, we were told that it's urgent. In any case, that's the speech that the Chambre de commerce gave us. So, I wanted to know whether this was the same speech, and, also, whether this same urgency was desired by your

members.

**Mr. Le Hire:** Ah! Exactly. Moreover, in the conclusion to our brief, we stressed the importance of producing results in future. As we mentioned, our way of viewing the problem is related to the necessity of restructuring our industrial base. To be able to begin this restructuring, given the size of the financial commitment needed to begin such a restructuring, such a revamping process, we must have a long-term outlook - 25 years. Today there are many plants in Québec's industrial sector which were built in the early 1950s, whose service life has come to an end and in which no substantial reinvestments have been made to modernize them because we wonder: Will it last? Is it this? Is it that? Is our outlook sufficiently broad to enable us to make major investments? These decisions have been put off until now because we would like to have answers to some important questions.

**Mr. Larose:** Fine.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Laberge, we have only 3 minutes remaining in our 40-minute period.

**Mr. Laberge:** O.K. Thank you. Let's focus on the environment issue because that was the last question you were asked. The brief is perhaps a bit vague in that respect. Of course we must look at what's being done elsewhere. We can't ask companies to stop polluting overnight, at extremely high costs in certain cases, but that doesn't mean that you must not be concerned about the environment.

When I look at page 45, for example: "...recognize that existing environmental protection and pollution control requires a financial outlay on the part of society as a whole which can only be made if we retain and improve our ability to foster prosperity, and agree to adopt environmental policies which do not compromise this ability." If, tomorrow morning, a polluting industry that was recognized as such, and for which nothing could be done, were to come to Québec, would we encourage that industry to go ahead when we already know that our environment requires special attention? I don't think that that's what you meant.

**Mr. Fortier:** The answer to that is easy: no.

**Mr. Laberge:** Good.

**Mr. Fortier:** The important thing in all this is that we want to operate in a climate in which all the demands that you make in the

manufacturing industry, that all of those demands, namely, to be competitive on a worldwide basis, competitive internationally, so that we can compete, so my colleague Claude Rivard can sell products in Québec, so that he can sell products in Ontario, so that he can sell products in the United States, so that he can sell products in Russia or Europe, etc.

**Mr. Laberge:** But, that's because manufacturers are usually discrete. And you haven't said whether... But, I was sure that that's what you meant.

**Mr. Fortier:** No, no. Listen, we benefit from the environment the same as everyone else around the table here.

**Mr. Laberge:** Mr. Chairman, I am very happy about this Commission. I see tremendous things in your brief. Corporate taxes in Québec are now more competitive than those of the United States, and are lower than those of other provinces. My God! And the list goes on. The purchasing power of low-income individuals is higher in Québec than in other provinces. All the things which we've already had the opportunity to discuss weren't as bad as all that, from what I can see.

**Mr. Fortier:** That doesn't mean that we have to stop there, though.

**Mr. Laberge:** The list goes on. No, this is great. Thank you, we've wanted to make you admit that for a long time now.

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

**A voice:** Did you notice that yourself?

**Mr. Le Hire:** You know, Mr. Laberge, there are even countries with socialist governments in power. Take, for example, another...

**Mr. Laberge:** You're probably more familiar with them than I am. I don't know anything about them.

**Mr. Le Hire:** The government...

**Mr. Laberge:** Socialist countries and I don't make good bedfellows.

**Mr. Le Hire:** The French government, which is currently re-examining its economic position, is a socialist government. Look at what it says: to protect growth, spending will be curbed, salaries monitored - in fact, de-

indexation will be implemented - public servants will be controlled, inflation will be prevented from retarding growth, companies will be allowed to remain competitive, their taxes will be reduced, and interest rates will be lowered to encourage investment.

**Mr. Laberge:** You'll be very happy in a Québec with more power. They've been doing that for ten years or so.

**Mr. Le Hire:** Oh! I'm sorry.

**Mr. Laberge:** I might have one or two questions.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** But listen here...

**Mr. Laberge:** It's not entirely true that you are as neutral as you say. First, you very clearly said that, in the current context, with the government and the way it operates, it was something you could no longer imagine living with because there was no outlook for the future.

And you went further than that. At one point, you said that you fully endorsed the Chambre de commerce's position on duplication and things like that. You spoke of the enormous waste of time, money and energy. These things are pretty clear. That means, then, that this sort of thing must be remedied.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Laberge, your time is up, but since the chair feels that you are speaking so well, we will let you take up more of our time.

**Mr. Laberge:** That is very kind of you.  
(8:30 p.m.)

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

**Mr. Laberge:** That is very kind of you, my dear Mr. Chairman.

You made me lose my train of thought with that. All this to say that the Chambre de commerce, Québec division - not the Chambre de commerce - the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, Québec division, fully agreed with what happened at the labour forum when people demanded that powers be repatriated to Québec so that Québec could obtain the labour force which it needs to meet Québec's needs. I don't think that's so very neutral. You have to read between the lines a little, hmm?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Are you through, Mr. Laberge?

**Mr. Laberge:** Yes.

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

**Mr. Laberge:** There's no one more obedient than I.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We now turn to Mr. Claude Dauphin.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Obviously, I consider that my colleagues on the Commission have asked excellent questions, since I also intend to ask them.

Now, what I got out of your brief was that evidently you are against the status quo, that you want very rapid change and, obviously, that you are willing to go ahead, as long as that ensures prosperity for your members, and also economic security for Quebecers.

If you will permit, I would like to return to the question of the environment. Many before me have discussed it. You said at one point that the governments should perhaps be more intelligent in their environmental decisions. You referred to the \$62-billion James Bay Phase II project; hydroelectricity is one of the main attractions with respect to investments for Québec.

Now, we have long heard experts or theorists telling us that, as regards the environment, with respect to the constitution, because that's what interests us most at this point, our jurisdiction should be as far-reaching as possible, that is, there should be national, if not continental, jurisdiction over the environment. Now, I wonder if you have studied this or if you have an opinion regarding environmental jurisdiction given our current situation.

**Mr. Le Hire:** We do, in fact, have a position and our position is as follows. As regards the environment, it is almost impossible for the state to act alone. It must be able to enter into agreements with other countries, with, in fact, the international community. What must be done and what we insist on is that governments work together at international forums and that we develop standards that everyone will apply and which will have an unvarying influence on everyone so that the rules of competition are not altered.

**Mr. Dauphin:** O.K. I'd like to ask just one other question, Mr. Chairman, if I may.

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

**Mr. Dauphin:** Obviously, like the *Chambre de commerce du Québec*, it's hard for you to accept the overlapping or duplications in jurisdictions. Now, from your daily dealings and after consulting your members, you must have

examples to give us regarding obvious examples of overlapping which could be eliminated.

**Mr. Le Hire:** The best example is the one which led us to participate in the labour forum, that is, occupational training, manpower training, shared jurisdictions between the federal government and the provincial government, infringements on jurisdiction over education, and the impossibility of decision sharing. And the administrative costs of this entire system must be considered. Forty percent of the amount earmarked for occupational training in fact goes towards administrative costs with disastrous results. Note that our criticism is not only directed at the sharing of powers between the federal and provincial governments, because within the Québec government itself, there are many serious cases of various authorities having overlapping jurisdictions, making the situation untenable. The reason an overhaul was requested was not only to protect Québec's jurisdiction, but also to produce results which will ensure that funds which must be spent on training efforts are in fact spent in this manner to the fullest extent and as efficiently as possible.

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

**Mr. Maciocia:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Le Hire, I will try to avoid a preamble, given that I am asking supplementary questions and preambles are prohibited in parliamentary commissions and in the House, and I will get right to the point. On page 46 of your brief, at one point you say: "And should Québec acquire greater political autonomy, it should, at all costs, continue to seek greater economic integration with the rest of Canada." My first question is this: What do you mean by greater economic integration with the rest of Canada? In your opinion, what tools will Québec need most?

**Mr. Le Hire:** Listen, a little earlier in this brief, we said that, in the current context, all formulas... In fact, we listed all possible formulas. It may be any formula, from the one requiring the minimum number of reforms to the one which would involve the maximum number of reforms. Regardless of the formula selected, we must maintain economic links not only with the United States but also with the rest of Canada, with Mexico and, in fact, with the entire international community.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Mr. Chairman, I understand this fact very well, but that's not what you said in your brief. You said: "Greater economic integration with the rest of Canada." Not just maintaining current links - you are talking about

greater integration.

**Mr. Le Hire:** Absolutely. We believe that the degree of economic integration must be intensified.

**Mr. Maciocia:** There we have it. In your opinion, what will be the avenues by which a Québec that is, let us say, sovereign with respect to the rest of Canada, will seek....

**Mr. Le Hire:** The European Economic Community is in the process of attaining a degree of economic integration unparalleled in history. For now, there are still countries called Germany, France. I mean that we do not want to limit ourselves, nor do we want anyone to think we are limited to one single formula. We are willing to consider several.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Thank you.

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

**Mr. Rémillard:** Thank you. Mr. Le Hire, Mr. Rivard, Mr. Fortier and Mr. Murray, on behalf of the gouvernement du Québec, I would like to begin by welcoming you and thanking you for agreeing to speak before the Commission. I would also like to thank you for presenting such an interesting brief. You are, of course, very important economic speakers as you play a key role in our economy, which makes it particularly interesting to hear your views.

Your brief is also stimulating because it is written from a perspective of economic dynamism and entrepreneurship, qualities that distinguish the Québec economy, and it is a far cry from the protectionist talk we heard not so very long ago. It is also interesting to hear you speak of economic integration, of market accessibility. We all know that you are against the status quo. You said earlier, Mr. Le Hire, that the system of government as it currently exists cannot solve our problems. One can deduct from this, since you endorse, or should I say, place as much emphasis on, economic integration, and your reply to my colleague's previous question, that you are against "pure, hardline" independence that can be qualified, using the terms of a brief presented to us this afternoon and to which you refer, that is, the brief presented by the Chambre de commerce. Thus, you are for a mechanism that would best favour greater access to markets. But in your opinion, which economic ties is it necessary to protect and develop? When you speak of economic integration, which economic ties are you referring to, both from an institutional and a trade viewpoint?

**Mr. Le Hire:** We also mentioned the issue of monetary policy. We said that if an association

of this kind is, in fact, maintained, we will have to make sure that it allows for the recognition of regional development priorities within the monetary union. We also mentioned that our priority is interprovincial and international trade. Listen, this type of trade leads to a situation where it will soon be easier for Québec to do business with the United States than with Alberta. That's absurd. The fact that we're at this point after living together for 100 years as a federation shows just how fossilized the system has become. Essentially, this is the type of economic tie we would like to maintain.

**Mr. Rémillard:** You refer to trade with another province. In your opinion, is there a political system that would tend to protect these types of economic ties? Do you feel that a federalist system is more likely to ensure these economic ties, or could Québec sovereignty ensure them just as well?

**Mr. Le Hire:** Listen, we just have to look at the experience of the past 100 years to conclude that the system doesn't work. Based on that, are you saying that a different type of federalism could guarantee these ties? Maybe, maybe not. Perhaps we wouldn't be any further ahead 10 years down the road than we are today.

**Mr. Rémillard:** And with sovereignty, Mr. Le Hire?

**Mr. Le Hire:** Same thing. We don't know.

**Mr. Rémillard:** What do you know?

**Mr. Le Hire:** About sovereignty? That's precisely it. We're saying that, at the moment, before being able to approve a given proposal, someone has to be able to demonstrate, communicate a vision that takes our priorities into account. We're not naive enough to think that society should essentially be based on our model. We know that there are other sectors of society that are supposed to present their views of what this model should be but, we, ourselves, will speak about what we're familiar with, that is, economic ties.

**A voice:** May I add something?

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

**Mr. Fortier:** What's important in our activities, once again Mr. Rémillard, is the climate in which we operate. If Ontario and Alberta are hostile toward Québec, it will obviously be very difficult for us to sell our products there. That's why it's important that this process be conducted... be perfectly understood by all, because it's important for us

to be able to continue our activities and grow within the territories in which we operate.

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

**Mrs. Marois:** Yes. Thank you Mr. Chairman. I have a lot of comments to make. I'll make a few and then ask some questions. My colleague, Mr. Léonard, has a few comments of his own. On page 41 of your brief, you state: "The time we spend debating the form of our government distracts us from our priorities and adds to the uncertainty." I'd say that if no one here - be it you or any other organization presenting a brief - even attempts to identify the preferred path much less the preferred political model, we run the risk of prolonging the uncertainty for a long time, and, thereby, not attaining, for all intents and purposes, your desired objective. In other words, avoiding the pitfall you want us to avoid. I think you can see a little bit what I'm getting at. So, in this respect, I'm all for our discussing and debating the question. I find it interesting. Your brief is particularly interesting; I'd like to raise other issues, but we must draw the line at some point. You will agree with us that in some ways, you don't make our job any easier.

Having said this, I'll state the question otherwise, to make it tie up with the previous questions. So, if I understand your brief correctly and if I follow you correctly in that we agree on the existence of a common market for a sovereign Québec and the rest of Canada, while maintaining access to the U.S. and, I would even say, North American market, you feel that the option of a sovereign Québec is acceptable and viable.

**Mr. Le Hire:** Theoretically, and on the condition that the criteria we defined as essential to the vision of this sovereignty are respected, yes. And I would again come back to what I said earlier. We must nevertheless realize that any change has its disadvantages, and if the changes are major ones, then we must make sure that the advantages ultimately outweigh the disadvantages; otherwise, it does not constitute a viable option.

**Mrs. Marois:** O.K. We understand one other. An earlier speaker, said that if we were to consider a renewed federalism or if we attempted to improve the coordination between provincial and federal policies within a federalist system - I think it was Mr. Ouellet - you would be willing to consider such an option. And he said himself that, since there seemed to be some jockeying going on, you would go with the highest bidder. I don't agree with that point of view because I think that we have seen for at

least the past 30, if not 100, years that there is, indeed, unacceptable duplications. And again I quote: "What can we say about the overlapping of responsibilities, other than to concur with the comments made by the Chambre de Commerce." I also understand that you endorse - and I'd like to make that point perfectly clear - the Chambre's demands that Québec take over many federal powers: education, research and development, culture, justice, communications, labour, interprovincial trade, navigation, inland transport, inshore fishing, manpower, income security, regional economic development, inland environment, native relations, health and social services, urban affairs, etc.

**Mr. Le Hire:** Listen, you must understand that an association like ours is not the same as the Chambre de commerce. The Chambre de commerce can voice an opinion on a wide range of issues since it, in fact, represents people from the sectors affected. I can tell you that I can't inform you much about inshore fishing.

(8:45 p.m.)

**Mrs. Marois:** But with respect to...

**Mr. Le Hire:** However, with regard to the manufacturing sector, there's no doubt that we endorse these claims.

**Mrs. Marois:** Fine. And you consider that, indeed, there is currently duplication and that the way in which we have operated to date has failed.

**Mr. Le Hire:** Exactly.

**Mrs. Marois:** O.K. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Léonard:** Yes. Good day. Mr. Hir, I would like to begin by making a remark on a statement that surprised me. You say there's no blueprint for a Québec society. I think there is. This society has existed for a long time, but in particular since 1960, and has made considerable effort to assert itself and I think it has obtained some results. Moreover, you say somewhere in your brief that Canada's competitiveness has decreased - although less in Québec than elsewhere - with a 5% gap. Therefore, something exists, and I think it's a society.

Now, let's get to the question at hand. We are supposed to make recommendations for a future political system or structure. You say that you cannot accept the status quo. I assume this means that you therefore reject the existing amending formula, since you say elsewhere in your brief that any changes should be made quickly: No more discussion! The existing

amending formula involves several years of discussion, with the result we're all familiar with in the case of Meech Lake, but that we could also see disappear with time.

So, this means another system that, when we come down to it, is separate from the Constitution. It seems to me the question we should be asking ourselves is the following: In a context of this kind, would a country such as Canada, with two levels of government – but as we are in Québec, Québec with another superstructure – cost a lot more to administer, or would an independent, sovereign Québec be much simpler, more flexible, more effective, better integrated with its businesses, and could it be more competitive internationally? Just before you answer my question, I also think... When you say that you agree with the *Chambre de commerce*, we evaluated what that meant in terms of the federal budget. Our calculations give us 68% as Québec's share of the federal budget, based on the powers listed on page 16 of the brief presented by the *Chambre de commerce*. So let's say between 60 and 70 percent, which is significant, and which will always be difficult to obtain from Ottawa. I would like to hear your views on this issue since, really, if we're looking to simplify the state and want better integration between government and businesses, should we not be aiming for outright sovereignty?

**Mr. Le Hire:** That's rather a rapid summary if you would allow me to explain.

**Mr. Léonard:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Le Hire:** I think the conclusion is obvious. Québec has shown a lot of dynamism. But we must face facts. It seems as though in the past few years, we have shown more dynamism than any other province. This is a positive point. However, this alone is not enough. We must also have that vision of the future that we referred to earlier. We need some leadership. We, the manufacturers, do not claim to be able to assume this role. We feel that we're not the only ones who have something to say, that other people will want to make a contribution to this Commission and that, indeed, based on all the contributions, including ours – and we would prefer that it be mostly ours – you will give our concerns a great deal of consideration and that you will be in a position to establish a model, a vision of Québec's future. And depending on how dynamic this vision is, it will either take hold or it won't.

**Mr. Léonard:** A certain dynamism has been demonstrated, particularly by the large companies and networks established in Québec in the past 20 to 30 years. In my opinion, this is part of

Québec society. When you say that there's no blueprint for society through the institutions that have been established in Québec, well, I feel that we have conveyed a blueprint for society. It's not perfect. There's room for discussion. In fact, I believe that right now, people are willing, to a certain extent, to set their vision of a society aside and are saying that before going any further and in order to go any further, we have to muster up all the powers in Québec. I think that is a... It seems to me that you should be able to give us a reply and enlighten us on this question since, really, this is a major point.

**Mr. Le Hire:** Indeed, I agree with you. There's no question that a number of projects have been realized in Québec in the past 40 years, which is extremely encouraging. But there is still an effort to be made and we are counting on this Commission to fit all the pieces together, the pieces we groups are presenting, so we can draft a blueprint for society and, if necessary, submit this blueprint to the population and if, for reasons... if the consensus is so obvious that the proposal automatically implements itself, we could perhaps dispense with public consultation.

**Mr. Léonard:** Taking this a little further, we agree – and I think everyone here does – with the signing of the free-trade agreement – nearly everybody, at least – and everyone seems to be proposing there be a monetary union, or common currency rather, and that we strive for a customs union. Are these the kinds of conditions that will favour competition and help you? You accept them too, I imagine – you say so in your brief. What more do you want?

**Mr. Le Hire:** Listen, you're asking us to commit ourselves and we'd like to see you, as a political party, do the same. Show us in your program that you have a vision that will allow us to attain our objectives and, if you convince us, we might be able to meet you partway.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Gentlemen, you have three minutes left. Mrs. Blackburn.

**Mrs. Marois:** I'd just like to make a comment, please. First, since the Parti québécois debates are fully public, you know you can consult our program. It's very clear on this issue. Second, when you cite... Somewhere in your brief you tell how Québec got out of the crisis of 1980 relatively well and you actually go on to say that the federal government came along seven or eight years later and undid it all, well that, among other things, was an example of working with businesses to support their



dynamism and support their desire to create wealth. So in this respect, I agree with my colleague that Québec does have its own model and one that has made it possible to... And I quote you again - I had the exact page here - you say that "Québec did less harm than the rest of Canada given that Canada is in somewhat of a bad position."

**Mr. Le Hire:** Allow me to point out that do less harm does not necessarily mean do good.

**Mrs. Marois:** I understood that.

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

**Mrs. Marois:** I'm very aware of that. But despite the federalist system and despite all the constraints you've mentioned, you say: Québec nevertheless did less harm. So, therefore, somewhere along the lines we did develop a model.

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

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Thank you. A number of statements in your brief don't make sense and I would like to cite them, not necessarily by page order. You say that: Monetary policies are not under Québec's jurisdiction. Interest rates are not under Québec's jurisdiction. We're not too much to blame for the costly overlapping either; that's the fault of Ottawa's encroaching on sectors of provincial responsibility. The Hydro-Québec problem, apparently not our fault either. The national debt, higher in Canada than in Québec, not our fault either. Decreasing competitiveness, that's Canada and, again, it's more serious in Canada than here in Québec. So much the better. And the cost of the tensions between Québec and Canada, you say, as if by accident... page 15 of your brief seems to make a relation between these tensions and our decreased competitiveness. And the list goes on...

What would you say if we proposed an option that ultimately transferred power to Québec, allowing us to take a certain amount of charge over the things you are currently denouncing, without trying to change the world? Let's begin by gradually rethinking the systems we have, by rethinking the systems Québec has established for itself to develop its economy, buoy up its economy, research assistance policies in particular, business research and development, and certain tax benefits. Would we really be worse off than we are now?

**Mr. Le Hire:** If you make commitments with respect to the powers you entrusted to you and if those commitments meet our demands, then perhaps we can meet you partway.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** O.K. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Chevette, if you...

**Mrs. Blackburn:** ...sovereignty. It's beginning to catch fire.

**A voice:** Are you out of time?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Yes. I'm out of time.

**A voice:** It's not yet 9:00...

**A voice:** Mr. Rémillard...

**A voice:** We still have one minute.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Rémillard, do you have any comments?

**Mr. Rémillard:** I'd just like to conclude by saying this brief has made an interesting contribution. I've taken careful note, Mr. Chairman, of many things cited in the report, such as on page 34 here, there's a sentence that says: "This makes Québec's corporate tax policy the most competitive in Canada." I also see it comments on Québec's good management policies, since we've cut the deficit in half. We share these positive comments.

But what I can tell you - and you are already aware of it - is that some of us would like to hear more, and, you know, for some politicians, the end justifies the means.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Chevette, one minute.

**Mr. Chevette:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. Manufacturers are realistic people. Can you imagine for 30 seconds transferring all that you are requesting under the existing Constitution, at 7-50, seven provinces, 50, or even unanimity on certain points? When you know the minimum holdings that were overthrown after an appalling amount of "pussyfooting around", what would you choose between 10 years of "pussyfooting around" and a clear solution that clarifies once and for all who runs what, while still retaining economic ties?

**Mr. Le Hire:** I'd like to conclude with another sentence from our brief: "Once again, let's take the time to look at what's going on elsewhere. In just 10 months, the Berlin Wall came down, the Communist countries collapsed, Germany, divided in two for 45 years, has embarked on economic and political reunification..."

**A voice:** ...

**Mr. Le Hire:** If things continue, in five years it will be...

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

**Mr. Le Hire:** ...the leading industrial power in the world. Of course, it will also have the prosperity that goes along with this position. "If they can do all that in just 10 months, why couldn't we?"

**A voice:** Let's do it!

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Le Hire, on this positive note, I would like to thank Mr. Rivard, you, Mr. Fortier and Mr. Murray for your excellent presentation. Thank you for taking the time to speak before the Commission. And thank you for answering the members' questions with such panache, sincerity, clarity and, I might add, such fervour.

The members of the Commission are requested to stay behind.  
(9:00 p.m.)

**A voice:** ...the session isn't adjourned... We're changing groups.

#### Conseil de la vie française en Amérique

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Gentlemen, if you would return to your seats, we will continue and listen now to the Conseil de la vie française en Amérique. Mr. Martin Légère, would you please introduce the people accompanying you.

**Mr. Légère (Martin-J.):** Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to introduce our delegation to you. First, our secretary, Dr. Roland La Flèche, from Sainte-Foy.

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

**Mr. Légère:** Yvan Forest, our treasurer, from Lévis. And two directors, Me Gérard Lévesque, from Vanier, Ontario, and Roméo Paquette, who has worked for 21 years with the French-speaking community of British Columbia. Our office manager, Esther Taillon.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have one hour. I will just remind the members of the Commission that the time for speaking during the hearings is one hour. You have 10 minutes to present your brief, 5 minutes for the chair, 10 minutes reserved for the parliamentary group forming the government, 10 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the official Opposition, and 25 minutes for members registered with the chair. So, you have the floor, Mr. Légère.

**Mr. Légère:** Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission. First of all, we would like to thank you most sincerely for having invited us to come make our presentation to your Commission, which we consider crucial for the future of the French-speaking people of North America. The fact that we are among the first called delights us. We consider ourselves somewhat privileged and we thank you.

Since there may be some of you on the Commission who don't know the Conseil de la vie française en Amérique, let me tell you something about it. The Conseil was founded in 1937 in response to the second Congress for the French Language held in Québec City. Its mission is quite simple: to defend and promote the rights of Francophones in North America. We have been carrying out this mission for more than half a century and are continuing to do so.

For a long time, we were the principal spokesmen for the French Canadian nation, with representatives on our board from Québec, all Canadian provinces and French-speaking America. However, over the years, other parties have joined us in demanding our rights, and we are glad of that and are pleased to work with them. Still, we remain very much on the scene with plans for the future, and that is why we are here tonight.

We are here first of all, as people who live outside of Québec, to express our recognition because one thing has to be said: Québec has provided ongoing support to us, the provinces outside of Québec. We Acadians especially have benefited in an extraordinary way from your generosity. Tonight, we would also like to express our affection and share our hopes. On the other hand, we must state quite clearly that we are not here to dictate a form of conduct to you, but instead to let you know that we have always believed that Québec was a distinct society. Moreover, our unconditional support for the Meech Lake Accord, from the very outset, is obvious proof of that. If you look back in the records, you will find that the Conseil de la vie française en Amérique supported, without exception, the Meech Lake Accord. We understood then and perhaps we understand even better now that this agreement could not have been the solution to all the problems of the Canadian nation, but it was very simply an agreement to give Québec its place within the great Canadian family. We understood very clearly how the failure of that undertaking, of that agreement, has caused consternation and bitterness among Quebecers and it is quite reasonable that you should be considering your political future. Since that future is of great interest to us, we thought we would make a few recommendations to you that would help to protect the rights and ensure the survival of your brothers and sisters living outside Québec. It is understood that the Conseil de la vie

française will respect the ultimate decision that the State of Québec takes about its political and constitutional future. So, having said all those things, we would now like to take the liberty of making a few recommendations to you:

1. That the National Assembly of Québec establish a standing directorate for relations with the Francophone communities and annually report on the situation of these communities, to maintain awareness among Quebecers about their brothers in the other provinces. That would be a permanent link of brotherhood.

2. That a form of political representation for Francophones outside Québec be instituted, possibly with one or more seats in the National Assembly, with the right to speak but not the right to vote on issues that do not relate to this role, so that you are always aware of the existence of your brothers outside Québec. It seems to me it would be wonderful if every time the Assembly met, you had the presence of two or three Francophones from outside Québec, to constantly remind you of your obligations to that sector of the Canadian nation.

3. That the links which already unite Québec with the various communities outside Québec be consolidated.

Here, permit me to note a link which already exists in the area of the caisses populaires. I think it will particularly interest Mr. Bédard. For a good ten years already, the members of the caisses populaires of New Brunswick, Ontario and Manitoba have been able to talk to each other and talk to Québec, thanks to the computer network with which we are affiliated. And for the last few months, because of the fact that the three federations of the caisses populaires of these provinces have become confederate members of an associate type, we already have very close links. It is precisely this kind of link that we want to consolidate throughout Québec and in the provinces where we are in the minority.

4. That Québec make better known outside the province its generosity to its Anglophone minority, which enjoys the freedoms and institutions necessary for its development.

I live in an English-speaking province and I often read English-language newspapers which are constantly talking nonsense about Québec concerning the minority. If we in the English-speaking provinces received the same treatment that Anglophones receive in Québec, we would be very, very happy.

5. That any future agreement with the other parties of Canada as it is today contain reciprocity clauses not only modeled on the generous treatment given the Anglophone minority in Québec but in terms of institutional "catching up" which must correct a delay that has lasted more than a hundred years. We would like the English-speaking provinces to be inspired by Québec to grant rights and services

to the French-speaking minority.

6. That a program of exchanges be established in the area of university studies to ensure a balance between what is available for the Anglophone minority in Québec and what is necessary for Francophones outside Québec.

7. That the Conseil de la vie française en Amérique be recognized as an intermediary between Québec and the Francophone communities of North America.

Ultimately, if it should come to pass, we would like Québec to make the Francophone communities a priority in its efforts to ensure the survival of the whole Francophone community of the country. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We will ask Mr. Turgeon to make the first comment.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Lègère, contrary to what we have said to other groups, whom we have chided for not addressing the fundamental question, I would rather congratulate you for not doing so. You represent Francophones outside Québec and you do not address the fundamental question because you believe the future of Québec to be fundamentally a concern of Quebecers and of Quebecers alone. I think that does honour to you.

Having said this, before speaking of the future, I would like to speak of the current situation. If I have understood your message correctly, you consider... you reproach the federal government for the way it treats the Francophone minority outside Québec. You are subsidized by the federal government?

**Mr. Lègère:** We were subsidized and here, since this is a financial question, I would ask our treasurer to respond.

**Mr. Forest (Yves):** Indeed, we have received grants in the past except that this year, we haven't received any. Let us say it may be a combination of circumstances, but there may have been some rather firm statements made by our member from Ontario and since then, we haven't received any grants.

**Mr. Turgeon:** You represent about how many Francophones outside Québec?

**Mr. Forest:** We represent, through our representatives, some 500 000 members, although there is no affiliation as concerns membership dues. It would take rather a long time to explain.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Do you have any idea of what the federal government gives as a grant to an association like Alliance Québec, here in Québec,

for example, to subsidize the English-speaking minority?

**Mr. Forest:** Yes. From the records we have had, and our office manager is here, it is a sum of about \$1 000 000 and we received nothing this year.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Right. Given the hypothesis of a future sovereign Québec, if I understand properly, you say: Let us maintain the links among us. I would like you to explain whether there are models you have seen, to propose, for example, that you have a seat, some representation in our National Assembly or if it is just an idea at this time.  
(9:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Lévère:** I would ask our legal adviser, Mr. Lévesque, to answer this question.

**Mr. Lévesque (Gérard):** We discovered that in France, the French abroad benefit from a senator or two and they participate in the Assembly, what is called the Assemblée Nationale, through this vote. The people from outside Québec could have a voice, without having a vote, because we wouldn't necessarily want such a person or such people to be involved in paving contracts in Québec, for example, but could, on occasion, within the National Assembly, comment on the American communities or comment on the situation experienced by the Francophone communities in America, not just in the Maritimes but in the West as well.

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

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

**Mr. Robert Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Lévère, you make a number of very interesting and positive recommendations. There is something I would like to call attention to. The fact that Canada remains an officially bilingual country reinforces the presence of French in North America. Although there remains a lot to be done in this area, I would ask you this: How long do you think francophones outside Québec will be able to avoid assimilation in a Canada that does not include Québec in its territory, in your opinion?

**Mr. Lévère:** That is precisely what concerns us, and that is why we are here, tonight, to say that if such a thing should occur, we would have to depend tremendously on Québec. And in the past, if I speak specifically about Acadia, where I come from, it was not the federal government that saved us, it was the Quebecers who came to help us after the dispersion. It was Quebecers who built our educational institutions, our

colleges, our convents. It is Quebecers who gave us our first daily newspaper and it is Quebecers who gave the first three French-language radio stations in the West. So what we are asking Québec is to step up its help and do even more for French-speaking people outside Québec.

**Mr. Libman:** Aren't you willing to admit that the survival of Francophones outside Québec depends on the powerful French core inside the central government?

**Mr. Lévère:** I wonder. If we take our institution, the Conseil de vie française en Amérique, they refuse to give us a penny in support, while Québec has been quite generous. And if the Conseil has survived to this point, it is thanks to the gouvernement du Québec, which came to our aid.

**Mr. Libman:** O.K. I'll come back to the first point. I want to know if Québec becomes sovereign, do you think that the assimilation of Francophones outside Québec is inevitable?

**Mr. Lévère:** I will ask Mr. Paquette, who has lived in British Columbia for 21 years, to speak on that.

**Mr. Paquette (Roméo):** I think, Mr. Libman, that the law on bilingualism in the country has not had much effect on Francophones outside Québec. The right was given to Francophones to address the federal government in one of the official languages, but in most of the provinces of the country, at least in the one I have lived in, British Columbia, I haven't seen many people who could be served in French, even in federal government agencies.

As far as the survival of Francophones is concerned, it is certainly not because of the bilingualism laws, because assimilation is just as strong as it always has been and not only is it just as strong, but it continues to gather momentum. That is the big problem in Canada. There is no special status for an official language community outside Québec, while in Québec, your minority, the Anglophone minority, has institutions, has completely adequate government support, while outside, we are still asking for crumbs. Do you realize that most of the families outside Québec don't have any kind of representation on the school boards because there is no Francophone school board as such? There is a privilege which is given, by some school boards, to allow some French classes and this has to be within the English classes because they don't discriminate, of course.

**Mr. Libman:** In closing, you said that there would not be a great difference, a great change of attitude between the present situation, which

is already disastrous, if Québec becomes sovereign, in terms of relations or the situation of francophones outside Québec?

**Mr. Paquette:** Not at all.

**Mr. Libman:** You don't see any great difference?

**Mr. Paquette:** We don't expect that it would do any harm because right now, there's no way to recover in any case.

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

**Mr. Poissant:** Mr. Chairman, I have no specific questions to ask these gentlemen. I think your report is tremendously interesting and I agree with Mr. Turgeon. As much as we want explanations about what to do in the future for Québec, we perhaps ask you.... Yes, you have respected that standard. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Hogue:** Mr. Chairman, I am here. I have read your brief. I have listened to you very attentively. I agree to a very large extent, and perhaps I would say I agree fully with your presentation. I think that I could fully accept your recommendations. I won't comment on the seat in the Assembly but... I can understand the frustration of a French Canadian in British Columbia for 23 years.

You said to us, we're talking here among friends, French Canadians, to us Quebecers - you speak of French Canadians in your text - of becoming more present, more active. You also say that the National Assembly and every Francophone in Québec or living in Québec must support you. I repeat, I feel very comfortable with everything you say. On the other hand, and I don't say this for political reasons, don't you think that the Government of Canada has played, over the years, a key role in the protection and the fulfilment of the French language in North America? And I understand the answer of your colleague who has spent 23 years in British Columbia, through, however, such institutions as the National Film Board, Radio-Canada. I ask you for your comment or your position on the role - what I call a key role, describe it as you wish - of the Film Board and Radio-Canada.

**Mr. Lègère:** It is obvious that the federal government, through the Secretary of State, has served the minorities. We cannot deny it because in fact the Secretary of State has given substantial grants to all Francophone associations outside Québec. Radio-Canada is also the link

that connects us with French-speaking Canada and our concern at this time is precisely that if Québec were to separate, we think, and we fear above all, that the role of the Secretary of State would become less visible. And then Québec would have to fill in, take over, so to speak, for the Secretary of State because our minorities, our minority groups need outside help. And it is clear that had it not been for the grants from the Secretary of State, many Francophone institutions would not have been able to survive and develop. So we accept that but we accept it not as a generous action but as an act of justice toward French-speaking Canadians in this country.

**Mr. Hogue:** Yes, yes, there is no doubt, it is not generosity, it is rights. And we are working in a context of rights and duties. I understand and I would like to ask you, Mr. Chairman, another very short question. You propose special measures that Québec should adopt with respect to Francophones outside Québec. You are open-minded enough to recognize that the Secretary of State and Canada have helped the French-speaking community through the Film Board and Radio-Canada. What do you think should be the role of the federal government in this respect, I mean with respect to the Francophones outside Québec?

**Mr. Lègère:** Well, I think that the Secretary of State should continue at this time, if I speak for the present, to be interested in Francophone groups and perhaps even increase its help. Look at the Western provinces, where French Canadians are very few in number. It is clear that the federal government has an obligation to this group because ultimately, although some Canadians don't want to admit that there are two races that founded the country, it is a historical fact that cannot be denied and I don't think that one of them should be put aside. If the Government of Canada were to take a look at what goes on in Québec, I think it would have a real lesson to learn for the Francophone minority, because ultimately here, in Québec, you have never denied the rights of Anglophones. I think that the Government of Canada has the same responsibility toward Francophones that you have toward Anglophones.

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

**Mr. Bouchard:** In fact, what you are telling us is that whether we want it or not, if Québec becomes sovereign, we have reason to fear that the federal government will decrease the programs it has set up to benefit the Francophones outside Québec since the relative weight of Québec would disappear from the

Canadian federation as a whole. At that point, even if these minorities are already in very serious difficulty, especially in the West, Québec would have to assume greater responsibilities.

I have had an opportunity to work in these fields, to work closely with Francophones outside Québec, and I have always had the impression - except in the Maritimes, and in Acadia in particular, where after all, there is a large minority - that elsewhere the Francophone presence in Canada is seriously threatened. It is in the process of slowly but surely disappearing and, in every province, incredible battles have to be waged to recover rights which are not acknowledged. Only two years ago we saw the Government of Saskatchewan cancel the agreement that had already been signed for the benefit of Francophones. And even today the federal government still hasn't succeeded, I think, in agreeing on distributing the substantial resources that had been allocated to introduce educational programs in Saskatchewan. It is also a fight between the federal government and the provinces, something we haven't mentioned. The federal government is even forced to fight with the provinces to intervene, to help the Francophones outside Québec.

I agree with you that a sovereign Québec will have among its fundamental obligations an obligation to show solidarity with Francophones outside Québec. We will have to create programs, create more than programs, have a kind of fundamental concern which is translated into close relations. How to do it? That is a problem and I don't think we can just skip over it. We will have to think seriously about it. You have made some proposals and they seem weak to me. I think this isn't enough. Just because there is a member there without the right to vote doesn't mean you will be able to establish strong enough links with the Francophones outside Québec. There has also to be some serious thought given with the other associations that represent them more immediately, these Francophones outside Québec, to design the links that you would like to have.

I think it will be a fundamental concern of the gouvernement du Québec, which will be the home of the French-speaking community and which will have to truly be it, to play a role in that community, not just on the world scene but also in relation to those of us who are outside Québec. Do you have any more specific ideas on what should be done? What ought to be done? What should be implemented? Are there some things you perhaps have in mind that you didn't dare write down? I think you have been rather timid.

(9:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Légère:** There could be agreements between Québec and the communities, without going through our governments, just as there are

agreements in other countries between a country and a community elsewhere. At that point, it would give more strength to the local communities and would allow them to express their needs and try to respond to them with the help of the gouvernement du Québec. Perhaps one action that might be undertaken by Québec is to help us outside Québec in making the image of Québec a little more real - the one that is conveyed by the media, especially the English-speaking media of the country - because this harms Québec and does tremendous harm to the Francophone communities outside Québec. There is a tremendously negative image conveyed outside Québec; it is one of a province which is the linguistic executioner of its minority. And it is very difficult for us, when we try to improve our fate with respect to our rights, to negotiate with our governments, to be told: Look at what is going on in Québec. And when we look at Québec, we don't see the same thing that the English-speaking media see. We see that there are limits that may be imposed in Québec but not the same negation of rights that we regularly experience at home.

Of course, in English Canada, there has been progress in recent years but it has been at the cost of unbelievable efforts by our communities. And at the present time, we have rights - we refer sometimes to the Charter of Rights - and there are many rights for which the provincial government is unable to use the "notwithstanding" clause to suspend those rights. And yet, these rights are not available to us. Just look at Article 23 of the Charter, on education, for example. That is not an article in which the government can use the "notwithstanding" clause. How many provinces have French-language school boards so that the Francophones can manage their schools? That goes way back in time. Already, at St. Andrew's, Prime Minister Lévesque, at that time, had launched the idea of reciprocal agreements. That could have been done in various ways. But he challenged English Canada to name one province besides Québec which allowed its minority full management of its institutions, from kindergarten to university. And it is a question you can still ask today.

It was interesting this year, to see the Supreme Court consider the fate of the management of the Franco-Manitoban schools. A few months after the death of former prime minister René Lévesque, the Manitoba judge in the Court of Appeals decided that yes, Article 23 should mean that in Alberta Francophones could manage their schools and he included in his judgment that challenge that Mr. Lévesque had issued in St. Andrew's. I think that the challenge is still there right now, despite the fact that we have had a Charter since 1982, and an article that says, yes, the minority is entitled to its schools, and a Supreme Court that has decided

that if it is entitled to have its schools, it is entitled to manage them. At this time, it is a battle in most of the provinces before the courts, even in Ontario where I am from. We are the largest Francophone community outside Québec. We have two French-language school boards, but we need many more. So we are back in the courts.

Right now, the system we have, federalism as we are experiencing it at this time, forces us to constantly be on the defensive to demand what should come immediately, since it's in the Constitution. So it is a system which, if it continues like this, will wear us out. That is why the status quo is unacceptable to us. We really have to change the system, find other formulas, in the country, that will see to it that the French-speaking community will not continually have to demand the oxygen it needs to develop.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Larose, from the chair's time, two minutes.

**Mr. Larose:** Oh, Mr. Chairman, it's because I was registered for this morning with priority on this subject because I think that it is the test case for Canada.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Well, if we negotiate a bit, perhaps three minutes.

**Mr. Larose:** O.K. My friend Ouellet, in his opening statement, told us that the federal system is one of the best systems in the world for ensuring or guaranteeing rights. I think that the situation experienced by minorities in Canada represents a perfect contradiction of that, of rights that were never respected. And the distinction between rights and privileges must always be made. When you say that in Québec our minority is privileged, I say that it's not true. We as a society have always recognized the rights of our minority, something that the rest of Canada has never done. And I think that we will never be tough enough to put an end to all those hypocrites who come give us full page lessons in the newspapers, saying that the Francophones of Québec are "mistreating" their minorities. We have always recognized their rights, first expressed in the control of their institutions: schools, hospitals, media and the economic levers. We don't want to talk any more about this pretence that claims that the country is bilingual and bicultural. That is merely an excuse for avoiding fundamental responsibilities.

This country will never be bilingual. This country will never be bicultural. This country will be a reality of four components: Native peoples, Anglophones, Francophones and the cultural minorities. What we are asking for in Québec is for full respect for the rights of these four components. And what we are going to ask from English Canada is the same thing. And if

Québec, in becoming autonomous and sovereign, has the maturity to recognize the rights of its components, you will be, in my view, in a much better position to claim not privileged treatment but rightful treatment. Furthermore, the same collective rights are not acknowledged for all the components. There are some 45 000 Native people here. If I were an individual rights activist, wall to wall, coast to coast, like my friend Libman here, well, the 45 000 Natives in Québec, they would have been "bawled out" pretty fast.

What we must recognize is the collective rights of the Native people. And the same goes for Francophones outside Québec. Collective rights must be recognized so that, in fact, we can see that their individual rights are respected; the same is true for the cultural communities. What must be recognized is their right to integrate with the majority. In Québec it's Francophone, outside Québec it's Anglophone. On that point there can be no ambiguity. And I hope that when we build a Québec like that, it will be a Québec of rights, but rights for everyone, I mean, not privileges. And I think your testimony on this is extraordinary, and if you have succeeded in maintaining a weak flame outside Québec, because there are too many of you in some areas, it is not, I would say, because of the recognition granted to us by the English-speaking provinces or by the federal government. It is in fact really because of the block we have always formed here, as a French-Canadian nation.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Larose, I have to interrupt you.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your time is up.

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

**Mr. Larose:** ...they really bug me on that count.

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

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Chairman, first of all, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for having agreed to come testify before us and thank you for your report. You have presented us with some extremely important food for thought because for Québec, it's important to stand up for the French-speaking community of North America. And I would like, Mr. Légère, to call attention to all the work you do. You come from a people of pride and determination, the Acadians, and I would like to pay tribute to you for the work you do, have done and are

continuing to do. You are right in saying that you were the first to support Meech Lake because you knew that by acknowledging the Canadian duality, for the first time in the history of this country, the minorities were given a legal basis. That was refused. You know that your prime minister and the government of your province are not free from blame for the fact that Meech is not part of the Constitution.

But let's turn the page and, in fact, I think that you realize, by the opinions you have stated for us that in a way, you were tricked by the 1982 Constitution. Of course, we have experienced it now, but Mr. Léghère, do you sincerely think, do you think that this theory of two nations, the French Canadian nation and the English Canadian nation, which you remind us is a theory which has already been around for a while, do you think it can still be applied in this country? Do you think it is still possible, throughout Canada, to have rights applied on the same basis as we can do here, for the recognition of the two official languages of Canada.

**Mr. Léghère:** Mr. Paquette dealt with that question, so I would ask him to...

**Mr. Paquette:** The fact is that I wrote the draft brief and I put in quite a bit about the question of the two nations because I thought it was important, but I think there is something important to say on this. Perhaps what I'm going to say is radical, but it's because fundamentally, this Commission exists because there is a French Canadian nation that has struggled for a place in Canada that it hasn't found outside Québec, that has long seen Québec as its principal home. The State of Québec is the heart of the French Canadian nation because, don't forget, this French Canadian nation counts more members outside Québec than in Québec itself, according to the American census of 1982. More than 3 000 000 people said that they were of French origin in New England and New York State and 98% of these were of French Canadian origin.

So this French Canadian nation had some hope. It had the hope of being recognized from sea to sea, at least, the nation that remained in Canada, and that hope has vanished. Today, it is probably... The French Canadian nation has shrunk its horizons and reduced them to Québec. It's wonderful because right now, you're safe, you have a majority, you are at home and you have your own home in Québec. So it's the heart of the French Canadian nation and all of a sudden, it will become the nation of Québec. The French Canadian nation, in all that, will end at the Québec border.

What we want to tell you is: The French Canadian nation continues to exist. It is still there and the only State that represents it or which will represent it will probably be Québec.

What we want is to be no more and no less than the citizens of Québec. If we are outside its borders, we want to have dual citizenship and even be citizens of Québec at the same time as we are citizens of Franco-America or the other provinces if that's what it takes. But if there were a way of establishing some mechanism of representation in this National Assembly, we would feel much more at home. That is how we see the two nations question. We see it from that perspective.

We have known quite well that since Mr. Trudeau invented multiculturalism, we knew that from that time on, history was over. We could no longer speak of two nations in Canada. It was finished. Just the two languages were left. Outside Québec, that language, the French language, is considered the language of individuals who are not yet assimilated. That is what I think the attitude of English Canada to be.

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

**Mr. Paquette:** So all we have left is Québec.

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

**Mrs. Hovington:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I certainly had a lot of clarifications and questions to ask of you, but I think that I have had the answers from the questions the other commissioners have asked before me. But I would still like one clarification. You say, for example, that you will respect the constitutional choice of Quebecers. That is certainly to your honour.

**Mr. Léghère:** Absolutely.

**Mrs. Hovington:** ...it was mentioned earlier. But you also say on page 2 of your brief, in the fourth section: "Quite obviously, a nation needs to have a strong state, which is clearly identified with it, in harmony with its legitimate aspirations, if it hopes to occupy its place in the sun." What I would like to hear you define is what for you is a strong state and what do you mean?

**Mr. Léghère:** It's that the State of Québec, ultimately, is the only State. If we return to the theory of two founding nations, perhaps the government in Ottawa would have been that strong government, would have been a State that was representative of the two nations, the two languages and the two cultures. But it didn't happen like that. The only State is the one of Québec. So it is the one which is strong, the one which represents, because a nation that has no home cannot speak of any legal existence, of, what can you call it, any collective, recognized



existence. So there has to be a State.

But how to reach that State when, all of a sudden, it becomes autonomous, totally autonomous, politically speaking? Because you see we anticipate that possibility.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Are you more attracted by an independent Québec than by federalism?

**Mr. Paquette:** Officially, we don't say so.

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

**Mrs. Hovington:** I would still like an answer.

**Mr. Légère:** We said, I think, in another way, that we are going to respect Québec's decision. So, tonight, it's not up to us to mix in your business. We respect you too much for that.

**Mrs. Hovington:** I can understand that, of course, but if you had some advice to give...

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

**Mrs. Hovington:** ...to someone, unofficially, not officially, unofficially, if you were to give some advice to Québec?

**Mr. Légère:** Our advice is that we will love you no matter what.

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

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

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would like to thank you, on behalf of the official Opposition, for having agreed to participate in this Commission. I would have a number of things. Thank you for your affection for us. It is mutual. Just to correct the impression that may have been left, Article 23 of the Canadian Charter does, in fact, respond to the St. Andrew's Agreement on reciprocity, which was intended to force the other provinces to offer education in French. Except that it had exactly the following effect: it is that it opens the door to English schools for all English Canadians who come to Québec. But it didn't do the opposite.

Secondly, you remember very accurately the efforts made by Mr. Lévesque to reinforce the links between Québec and the Francophone communities. There was St. Andrew's and there was the institutionalization of the relations between the various communities and Québec. There are some who claim that it is because numbers are insufficient and thus some rulings have taken that direction in the other Canadian provinces: not enough Francophones. But I would

just like to answer that in my region, there is a school board called the Saguenay Valley. There are some 300 000 inhabitants in our region, 325 000, and the 250 Anglophones have a school board. Who could do better? So when they say: There aren't enough, let them come to Québec and see what we do. And those are what I call rights, not privileges, but rights.

You said a number of things. We are short of time but you make a particularly harsh judgment when you say, on page 4 of your brief, that "...certain federal policies, including the substitution of abstract 'multiculturalism' for 'biculturalism' that follows from the concept of two nations, have contributed to burying forever the prospects of 'dual' partnership", and you said that the constitutional status quo is unacceptable for Québec and the same is true for Francophones outside Québec. If the status quo is unacceptable, we have to consider changes. I won't ask the question from the angle the others have asked it but you'll tell me... And I don't want this to be a trap for you. I know that you are not going to and that you don't want to tell me what to do, but still, as a Francophone outside Québec, do you think that your interests would be better protected by a sovereign Québec than a Québec that is part of the Canadian constitution?

**Mr. Légère:** I think that only the future can tell. It will depend on your attitude toward minorities.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** O.K. So if Québec continues the policy it now has, the policy of openness it has had toward the Francophone communities outside Québec, would that seem to you to be an adequate guarantee?

**Mr. Légère:** No. Québec would have to do more.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** You were saying before, I think I understood in answer to a question from Mr. Rémillard, what might justify the creation of a seat in the National Assembly for a representative of the Francophones outside Québec, you said, we could perhaps envisage a status of dual citizenship. Am I to understand you that you could consider, in the case of a sovereign Québec, that Francophones outside Québec could be Canadians and Quebecers? Is that sort of what you meant?

**Mr. Légère:** Yes. In my opinion, it seems to me I would willingly agree to have two citizenships, both Quebecer and Acadian.

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

**Mrs. Blackburn:** That reinforces Québec's identity...

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

**Mrs. Blackburn:** ...as Francophone. There was a question at the very beginning, I don't remember which speaker said that the policy of biculturalism in Québec may have reduced the rate of assimilation of Francophones outside Québec. Do you have any more recent data on that? On the rate of assimilation, starting with British Columbia?

**Mr. Légère:** Well now, I don't know if it's a good idea to get into a war of numbers because the statisticians...

**Mrs. Blackburn:** No.

**Mr. Légère:** ...don't seem to agree among themselves.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** O.K.

**Mr. Légère:** I can give you some statistics but even there, I wouldn't like them to be viewed as being the absolute truth, but it varies from 7%, I think - the rate of assimilation in New Brunswick - to 87% at the other end of the country. But what I think is important is to ensure that Québec helps the communities outside Québec so that they can continue to take part in the French-speaking world. The more Québec helps us, the more we will be able to maintain ourselves and develop in French and the more we can do that, the better that will be for you, whatever constitutional system you have. That will make you ambassadors to those places in America, with whom you will be able to work, do business, communicate and develop.

I think that one of the problems we have in English Canada is that our situation is not well enough known in terms of our rights, both in English Canada and in Québec and vice versa. Your situation and that of the Anglophone minority is not well enough known outside. Along those lines I can just briefly remind you of a small intervention we made last year, despite the meagre means we have available in our organization to denounce the hypocrisy of English Canada with respect to linguistic rights. A year ago there was an international meeting of the Union of Lawyers and one of the subjects dealt with was minority rights. We took advantage of the opportunity to draw public attention to one example per province of that hypocrisy. It received a lot of coverage in the English media. A lot was written about it because the word "hypocrisy" shocked a lot of people. They thought the word was a strong one.

On the other hand, in no province were they able to say that the examples we had brought to public attention were inaccurate. They were examples taken from their own

legislation in each province.

And so one year later, half of these provinces have corrected or begun to correct this situation, which shows that when you expose the real situation, when the issues are very clear, some progress can be made. But we are combatting a media system in North America that is very hard to fight, especially at the Anglophone level, in order to convey our equality.

I will give you just a few of these examples. In Ontario, even in the National Capital, before the provincial courts, permission had to be asked before using French - written permission from the other party. Well, when we denounced that, the province, a few months later, last fall, last November, tabled a bill which received third reading in December and which came into force on February 1 of this year, and there, in eight judicial districts, you no longer have to ask for written permission from the other party to use French.

In New Brunswick, as you know, the Supreme Court had decided that Acadians had the right to speak French before the courts but didn't have the right to be understood in French. When we raised that example, it caused a lot of talk, but the Speech from the Throne, last February, in New Brunswick said that it was going to be corrected. On October 31, just last week, the Minister of Justice of New Brunswick tabled a bill in first reading correcting that injustice and ensuring that from now on, when it has become law, it will be possible to use either of the two languages before the judicial and the administrative courts of New Brunswick.

I am going to give you just one example for all the rest of the other provinces of English Canada. Most of these provinces give so little recognition to French with respect to court documents... As you know, those who do business with the legal system in Québec, there is no problem using texts in English or in French before the courts. Well, when they tried that in the other provinces, even in Manitoba where, since the last century, there were supposed to be rights with respect to the legal system in French, to have what is called reciprocal enforcement of a ruling rendered in French in the other provinces, not just in Québec but in Ontario, where French is now one of the official languages of the courts and where you can have rulings rendered in French, so if we managed to have a ruling rendered in French enforced, executed in these provinces, it was not accepted. It had to be translated and when it was filed in the court, they claimed that the original ruling was rendered in English. Well, three of the provinces that were denounced have begun to change their legislation.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Blackburn, you have one more minute.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Don't you think that a sovereign Québec - I come back to it - which has complete charge of the means, of its policies, which decides on its means of intervention and forms of association and can institutionalize them, can constitute a real support for Francophones outside Québec, especially for French Canadians? And doesn't that constitute for you, the Francophones outside Québec, a kind of advantage to being Francophone which is not obvious as things now stand, because of the economic relations, you just mentioned the cultural ones, in communications, research and the universities? Doesn't the status of a French-speaking country in North America constitute an advantage for the Francophones outside Québec?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I would ask you, although it's a delicate point, to give a quick answer.

**Mr. Légère:** O.K. I think it's a rather difficult question to answer. However, we are convinced that Québec will be able to do what is necessary to ensure the survival of French in Canada.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you very warmly for your very kind welcome. We have found here in Québec what we were looking for: friendship and kindness. We have been given it. Thank you.

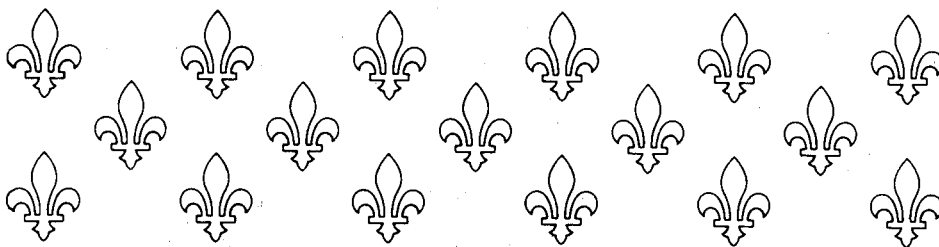
**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Légère, just a final minute for Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. La Flèche, Mr. Lévesque, Mr. Légère, Mr. Paquette, Mrs. Taillon, Mr. Forest, thank you. You know, Mr. Légère, they say there are more than 1 000 000 Acadians who are now in Québec because these people, who came to Québec and now live in Québec, are part of Québec society and are very active; we know many of them. You also know, obviously, that Acadia is Québec's neighbour. So your cry from the heart just now, saying that you would like to be both Quebecer and Acadian, will perhaps give some of us ideas to expand the territory of Québec!

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** So, to conclude. You just said that you would love us whatever we are. Well, we can repeat to you that now that we know you better, we love you even more. Thank you.

I would like to remind the members that we will now be switching to a working sitting for a few minutes. May I ask all those who are not members of the Commission to leave?

(End of sitting, 9:59 p.m.)



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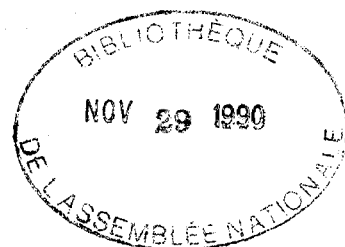
# ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

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PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

## Journal des débats



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

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

**Québec, Thursday, November 8, 1990**

**No 3**

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Mr. Claude Béland

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Mrs. Rosette Côté

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Mr. Robert Libman

Mr. Serge Turgeon

Mr. Roger Nicolet

Mr. André Ouellet

Mr. Gil Rémillard

Mr. Christos Sirros

Mr. Guy Bélanger

Mr. Russell Williams

Mr. Jean Campeau

Mrs. Jeanne L. Blackburn

Mr. François Gendron

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Mr. Charles-Albert Poissant

Mr. Gérald Larose

Mr. Marcel Beaudry

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Mr. Jacques Brassard

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Québec City, Thursday, November 8, 1990

## Hearings: Organizations

(9:39 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I declare this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. May I remind you, as at the start of each sitting, that the mandate of the Commission is to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and to formulate recommendations in that regard. Today, the sitting will be devoted to hearing organizations which have sent briefs to the Commission, which the steering committee has selected for hearing today and which have agreed to appear today.

Now I am going to read out the agenda of the sitting. It is somewhere among the many papers I have in front of me. Here it is. This morning, right now, we will first hear the Fédération des commissions scolaires du Québec; then at 11 a.m., the Association québécoise des organismes régionaux de concertation et de développement. This afternoon at 3:30 p.m., the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec; at 5 p.m., the Commission des droits de la personne du Québec. Finally, this evening at 7:30 p.m., the Association provinciale des commissions de formation professionnelle, and at 9 p.m., the Ligue d'Action nationale.

Let me remind you of a few of the rules governing our discussions. First, for a sitting lasting an hour and a half, like the one we are starting, a group presenting a brief has 10 minutes to present it. Remember that the members of the Commission have received a summary of the brief and have familiarized themselves with it, and that this presentation period, of course, is used to emphasize the principal points and to put everyone in the picture, so to speak. When the presentation is over, the members of the Commission will have time to speak, divided as follows: 10 minutes for the Chair, 15 minutes for the parliamentary party forming the government, 15 minutes for the party forming the official opposition; the two 15-minute periods may be taken in different segments. Forty minutes for members who have registered with the Chair, that is, who registered before the sitting, with each member having 10 minutes at his disposal. And we have a timing system that, provided it works well, as it usually does, should ensure the fairness of the procedure.

At the start of the sitting, we have with us members of the media - I was going to say written, but it is not written, it is not spoken either, I mean the ones who photograph and take pictures. They have eight minutes to take pictures that are totally different from those they took yesterday and those they will take

next week. And as soon as that period is over, it will be full steam ahead. However, right now I would like to ask the Fédération des commissions scolaires to begin the presentation, by asking Mr. Guy d'Anjou to first introduce the people who, along with him, will be representing the group that is before us. Mr. d'Anjou.

**Fédération des commissions  
scolaires du Québec**

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, it is a great pleasure for me to introduce the people who are here with me to represent the Fédération des commissions scolaires du Québec. On my left, the first vice-president of the Fédération, Mrs. Diane Drouin of Drummondville; still on my left, the second vice-president, Mrs. Lise Lemieux, chairman of the commission scolaire des Découvreurs, Sainte-Foy; at the far left, Mr. Marc Sabourin, member of the administrative office of the Fédération and vice-president of the commission scolaire Sainte-Croix; immediately on my right, the Director General of the Fédération, Mr. Fernand Paradis; next, a permanent professional employee of the Fédération, Mr. Guy Beaudin, who helped write this brief.

I imagine that you have familiarized yourselves with the brief. I shall try to be succinct. The Fédération des commissions scolaires represents almost all the school boards that are, shall we say, French-language, Catholic or for Catholics, 168 out of 170. There is another association that represents the Protestant school boards of Québec, which will probably report to you on its point of view regarding the political and constitutional future of Québec. The Fédération's objective, of course, is to respect its mandate and present the point of view of the school boards on the role of education for the future of Québec.

The first point we deal with is the division of powers between the various levels of government, between the federal government and the provincial government. If you have read the brief, I imagine that you are already aware of our position, namely we believe that everything directly or indirectly concerning education, in particular professional training, manpower policies, and cultural policies, should come under Québec jurisdiction. I think our position is very clear on the subject. For the sake of efficiency, for the sake of consistent programs, we believe that Québec must have full powers in this area. Still, there are other jurisdictions in certain areas. This creates problems for us, sometimes contradictory policies, and we believe that it is a good idea for Québec to have jurisdiction in these areas for the sake of efficiency, economy,



and consistency.

Regarding the aboriginal peoples, we believe that their education should be under the jurisdiction of Québec, since education comes under provincial jurisdiction. We believe that the aboriginal peoples have the right to manage their educational institutions, that they could have school boards, like others in Québec, and that these school boards should come under the jurisdiction of the gouvernement du Québec.

Regarding manpower training, let me call your attention to page 4, to the major expenditures by the federal government, expenditures that are increasing with the reforms in unemployment insurance. I say to you, again for the sake of consistency, we are talking about \$ 460 000 000 that the federal government currently sets aside for vocational training and, when the new law on unemployment insurance comes into effect, we are talking about an additional \$ 800 000 000. Naturally we have no objection to the federal government's spending money if it wants to, but the programs should be administered and ran entirely by Québec, and there should be good coordination in this area.

Regarding communications, we believe that the content of all forms of communication should be under Québec's jurisdiction, for fairly obvious reasons. As for immigration, faced with the need for a population policy here in Québec, we believe that immigration should be under Québec's jurisdiction entirely, that in particular reception programs, francization programs should be operated entirely by Québec and that the school boards should play a major role in this area. Instead of having special schools to welcome immigrants, we believe that it is in the interests of the community for immigrants, both adults and school-age children, young children, to be received by their neighbourhood schools, and that their first contact and the main services they receive should be provided by the local school in the neighbourhood or village where these people settle. We believe that this would greatly facilitate immigrants' adaptation to Québec society and their integration into it. This seems extremely important to us.

I am coming to the conclusion of the first part, the recommendation: Québec must have exclusive jurisdiction over all issues directly or indirectly related to education within its territory, specifically in training, culture, and communications. Québec must have the power to decide on the number of immigrants, to select them, and to welcome them. Québec must give school boards the mandate to organize welcoming services for the new arrivals.

I will quickly go on to the next section: school boards and local government. We know that school boards have existed for 150 years, and that they are part of the history of Québec. We know that in the context of North America,

there are local bodies throughout this continent that have authority over education. School boards have evolved over the years. Not so long ago there were 500 of them; now there are 200. Let's say that they provide an interesting example for other local bodies, namely the need to amalgamate in order to be more efficient. But there has been a trend toward excessive centralization. I think that everyone is aware that the pendulum seems to want to swing back toward the centre. We have always advocated greater decentralization, greater assumption of responsibility by local authorities. We are still moving in that direction, and you will allow me to quote what was said by Mr. Léon Dion during the conference on the role and future of Québec institutions organized by Laval University, namely that despite the stability or even the growth in the role of the State, it is becoming increasingly difficult to designate who is responsible, whence the importance of decentralization, of greater local assumption of responsibility.

There is also the question of the guarantees granted Catholics and Protestants by the Constitution of 1867. The 1982 Charter of Rights provides linguistic guarantees. We have always believed and we still believe that Catholics and Protestants have historic rights, that these rights must be respected, and that these rights must be guaranteed by the Constitution. Conversely, for a number of years the Fédération in its annual meeting has come out unequivocally in favour of linguistic school boards, in other words, school boards that consist of French-language schools and school boards that make it possible for Anglophones to administer their own schools and that bring speakers of English together in the same schools. But there is nevertheless an important phenomenon, because of the historic rights from the confessional point of view, and here, at the present time, until the reform has been accomplished, we represent English-speaking Catholics. These people want constitutional guarantees regarding religious education in the schools. And I know that Protestants want the same guarantees.

I can tell you that French-speaking Catholics also insist on the right of parents to have their children receive religious instruction in school, as has traditionally been the case in Québec since the founding of Canada; parents want it. You should perhaps conduct a survey or a check, and you would find that most of the young people who attend our schools have been baptized, and their parents want religion to be taught in school. At this time, we are reflecting the wishes of the public, our students and their parents, and we believe that these constitutional rights must be preserved. They can be modified, however, to encourage the setting up of linguistic school boards.

With the reform that is beginning in

Québec at the present time, there is a risk of overlapping structures, in particular on the island of Montréal. For Francophones, the final result could be, and probably will be, the retention of a confessional school board in which most Quebecers descended from the original French settlers pursue their studies and the establishment of a superimposed linguistic school board in which the majority of students are immigrants, with a variety of ethnic origins, or new Quebecers, if you prefer. And this does not encourage the integration of the latter into Québec society.

We believe that in exchange for constitutional guarantees for Catholics and Protestants which respect their historical rights, the school boards, both Catholic and Protestant, currently protected by the Canadian constitution could develop in the direction of a linguistic status. That is why we are demanding that such local government and such historic rights be recognized in the Constitution. The constitutional framework proposed by the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec must include guarantees regarding the existence of local school governing bodies; this is on page 12: "It must be specified that the citizens of a given community shall have the right to have an Anglophone or Francophone school board to administer public education on their territory, in observance of historical confessional rights; that the school board shall have the necessary powers to meet the needs of the population of its territory for educational services; that the school board commissioners who represent the public shall be elected by universal suffrage; that the school board shall have the right to levy taxes to meet the public's need for educational services on its territory".

The school boards want stability. Educational structures have been tinkered with for years. Our dearest hope is that everything can be settled harmoniously, with respect for rights, and there will finally be stability, so that we can concentrate on the quality of our educational services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you for your presentation, Mr. d'Anjou. Let me thank your group for presenting their views clearly and for having the kindness not to inflict 500 pages on the members of the Commission, who will have so many more pages to read.

We will now go on to the period set aside for comments and questions by Commission members, who each have a maximum of 10 minutes. Mr. Beaumier will go first.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. d'Anjou, when I read your brief, it greatly interested me, since I have belonged to the educational milieu since my recent retirement. But it is on the very last page, page 13, when

you say that the school board shall have the power to levy taxes to meet the public's need for educational services on its territory...

At the present time, we are, along with the government, supposed to be discussing a division of responsibility for municipalities, to assume a little more of it, therefore to make a greater financial commitment, and this affirmation that you want to see entrenched in a future constitution poses serious questions about our commitment regarding the future of municipalities, on new responsibilities.

I would like a succinct answer to the question: "Is the taxation power meant to be limitless and is it still to be based on property?"

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Until now, this has also been a historical right, like those I mentioned earlier. School boards have been based on property tax for a long time. In fact and in law, this has never been reserved exclusively for municipalities. We believe that it is possible for these two local authorities to coexist, with each one having an independent source of revenue so that it has room to manoeuvre and assumes greater responsibility.

It is certain that a fair division should be made between the two levels of government, and we understand the situation of the municipalities, but we think in the long run there will be a limit on the tax rate that can be required of taxpayers. That is a certainty. And if there is a greater transfer of responsibility to the local level, whether school or municipal, I think the government will have to consider the possibility of transferring other sources of tax revenues. It must come to that eventually.

What we basically want is to keep some room to manoeuvre, so that we can meet local needs; this leeway has been eroded over the years because of the chronic under-funding of school boards. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Do you have any more questions, Mr. Beaumier? Then we will go on to Mr. Claude Béland.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. d'Anjou, in your brief, you remind us of certain provisions of the Constitution. For example, you say that it is clear that in the Constitution, the entire area of education and training is under provincial jurisdiction. But you nonetheless make rather harsh judgments by saying that this is very far from the situation in reality, and you mention, among other things, that the federal government uses funds that are available only if the conditions laid down by the federal government are observed. You say that the federal government thereby imposes choices on the provinces that its constitutional powers do not permit it to impose directly. Therefore, what you are saying is that there are things in the

Constitution, but in practice, with the means the federal government has at its disposal, the Constitution is not being respected. What surprises me, however, is that you say in your brief that in future, to settle this, it must be written into the Constitution. What do you really suggest in order to prevent once and for all, or make impossible, the encroachment of the federal government into the area that concerns you, or rather areas, since you are going beyond the area of education alone; you are getting into immigration, because you say it has an impact, and into communications? What are you really suggesting, because we on the Commission have a blank page in front of us and we have to make recommendations to the National Assembly suggesting how to solve these problems, since everyone says they are problems? What do you suggest should be done so that these questions of encroachment can be settled once and for all, if possible?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** The way the Canadian Constitution is set up at present, specific, well-defined powers are given to the provinces; the federal government has residual powers, and in addition, spending powers that allow it to meddle in various areas that are clearly under provincial jurisdiction; there are a number of examples. I think the easiest way is to eliminate dual jurisdiction insofar as possible. And if the federal government wants to spend money, in my opinion the funds should be transferred to the provinces absolutely and the provinces should be allowed to have well-coordinated programs instead of programs that overlap each other.

**Mr. Béland:** Say it doesn't do that, then what?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** If it doesn't do that, well, then it is clear that if the elimination of dual jurisdiction is being advocated, it means constitutional amendments to bring this about. Now I am no expert, to just draft a new Constitution on the spot.  
(10 a.m.)

**Mr. Béland:** May I be of assistance? Are you suggesting that spending powers be taken away?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** It would be necessary to at least limit them considerably. If they want to spend money, I am not completely against spending powers, on condition that the funds are transferred to the provinces; that it be the provinces that administer them. That makes a difference!

**Mr. Béland:** Even though that that is not what you have been experiencing.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** No, but I think there are

many things that could be specified in constitutional amendments. That, I think, is the exercise we are performing.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you.

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

**Mr. Holden:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. d'Anjou, I have had occasion in the past to be a witness in court, as well as being a lawyer, and I have always preferred asking questions to answering them. But you are in somewhat the same position today. I don't know whether the CECM [Montreal Catholic School Commission] is a member of your federation, but let me remind you - you are probably aware of this - that Mr. Pallascio and his faithful followers in Montréal at one point tried to introduce a regulation to prohibit the use of the... of languages other than French outside the actual teaching situation; that is, they wanted, I don't know, to prevent the children from playing soccer in any language but French. The regulation was not passed. People fought it. And an amendment was introduced to Bill 101 specifically to prevent any board or educational institution from similarly infringing upon the individual rights of the students and to avoid a situation of this type. I would like to have your reaction to this type of coercive measure to promote the French language.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** To start, I must tell you that the CECM does not belong to the Fédération. It is one of the two school boards that are not members. Let us say that it is a purely local decision. For my part, I don't want to interfere in the internal operations of school boards. I understand the desire to promote integration and French language learning. We know that French is not learned solely by taking courses, and in order to really master it, which you know because you speak French well, you must have an opportunity to speak it. Now I agree that individual rights must be respected, but at certain times there are measures that must be taken, without agreeing with that one in particular, to respect collective rights too. I think we must scrupulously respect individual rights, especially the most fundamental ones, but we must also realize that there are collective rights that must be preserved in the long run. No. I can say to you that in this case we have taken no position because it doesn't involve us directly, but the Fédération has no formal position on it. We have had no chance to discuss it.

**Mr. Holden:** I am giving you the chance, Mr. d'Anjou.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Yes, well, we will think about

it, my dear sir. But I can say that basically the Fédération desires respect of the fundamental rights of all citizens of Québec, while at the same time it advocates respect of the French language in Québec.

**Mr. Holden:** Like Mr. Béland, we have to give our opinion on possible amendments to laws in general, on the idea of amending Bill 101 to include specific mention of such respect. What is your reaction?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** We have not studied the question. But if there is ever a question of amending Bill 101, we will study it seriously and take a position. But as for rights, from the educational point of view, I think that opposition was stated clearly just now. It is clear that we want the rights of Anglophones to be respected: the right to administer, to run their schools, to have English-language schools, rights that must be respected in toto. We also want the rights of the aboriginal peoples to be respected, we want them to have the possibility of running their educational institutions and we want French-language schools to be under the responsibility of French linguistic school boards. All French-language schools in Québec. That is our position.

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

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

**Mrs. Côté:** Yes, I confess, ladies and gentlemen, that I was somewhat surprised to see that you didn't take a position in favour of any constitutional framework. Because all the logic and arguments that you put forward in your brief would lead in the end to speaking of a state that is, if we come right out and say it, sovereign. Because you are talking not just about education, you are also talking about economic matters, because you say that it is important for manpower to be well trained, to be able to respond to the dictates of the economy. You are also talking about the actual situation regarding the aboriginal peoples, immigration, language, and you are going even further, when you say on page 3 that this dual jurisdiction goes so far as to almost jeopardize... or [talk about] contradictory objectives. This is more than just saying there is encroachment by the federal government, there are excessive spending powers. There are overlapping jurisdictions. There are also differences of orientation in regard to the task of education. You also go further, you talk about local government. It seems to me that it is easier to negotiate with a single government than to negotiate with two different governments. And you take no position, none at all, regarding the constitutional framework that Québec should have. I would like you first of all

to speak to us on that subject. Second, I would like you to explain something about the operation of that whole type of local government status that the school boards could have, within the framework of a new redefinition of Québec.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** A possible constitutional framework: you would like the Fédération to take a position in favour of one of the two approaches. I think that out of respect for our members, who, as you well know, are politicians, men and women engaged in politics, who are frequently called on to act at the level of federal or provincial politics, even municipal politics, and who have a variety of orientations, it is clear, at that point, I think we, the member school boards, have no mandate to adopt such a specific policy as a federation. Out of respect for these persons, it is certain that it will be necessary to hold broad consultations. But when we talk about school boards, it doesn't just mean school commissioners, it means all types of school board personnel. I would even say that it means parents and students. Don't ask me in the name of the Fédération... the board of directors and the school boards would never agree to our taking a specific position right here and now on these policies.

**Mrs. Côté:** Have you planned on such broad consultation? Since you say that there will be consultation, that means that...

**Mr. d'Anjou:** I didn't say that there would be consultation.

**Mrs. Côté:** No; have you planned on consultation with your members?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** About that, no, not so far. The other question, how would it work? I think that the framework already exists. The framework is a local authority which is a school board, which has representatives who are appointed, or publicly elected by universal suffrage, which has certain powers to administer education, to provide guidelines or to meet local needs, and which has certain taxation powers. There are also, I think, and we have seen this in the previous organizations, new government policies that are moving in the direction of giving local authorities more responsibility. The framework exists. It is now a question of operation between the central authority and the local bodies. This would perhaps require new agreements, having more confidence in local communities, giving them more responsibility, and above all, leaving them more room to manoeuvre, not only financially but also in decision-making. I think that everything is in place. It comes down to the philosophy behind its operation and better division of responsibility.

It doesn't require a constitutional amendment at that level.

**Mrs. Côté:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Jacques Proulx now has the floor.

**Mr. Proulx:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Part of my question has already been asked, but to finish it: once all powers have been repatriated, in fact, as you state – you give reasons for its importance in regard to education, vocational training, adaptation – how do you see yourself subsequently as a school board? With complete responsibility in that area? Have you thought about it? Do you already have a good...

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Responsibility is shared by the local authority and the central authority. Responsibility is shared by the gouvernement du Québec and the school board. We do not deny the State a role in Québec, on the contrary. But we believe that in practical, everyday application, the school boards should have somewhat more responsibility, somewhat more leeway to make decisions adapted to the needs of their community.

**Mr. Proulx:** My question goes further than that. This afternoon, moreover, we will have the vocational training people coming and filing a brief. They also state, I don't want to get ahead of the proceedings, but they state that powers must be repatriated and so forth. They also have tasks to perform in that context. They have responsibilities, they administer, and so on. And you say you do too. Who exactly? Suppose all this is repatriated to the gouvernement du Québec. I agree that the gouvernement du Québec will have powers. You are asking for more powers for local governing bodies, local school governing bodies. How are they going to act later? We know how it works today, but still. There is often encroachment of jurisdictions, we know, we have to work with it. What I want to know is, once it is achieved, how will you act in all this, so that this is clear too. While we are clarifying one thing, we would do well to clarify everything. How would you clarify it?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** You mean how is it going to work on the regional or local level?

**Mr. Proulx:** According to you people, is it going to be the school boards, once the powers have been repatriated, always respecting the gouvernement du Québec which sponsored it, that would have complete responsibility with respect to education, vocational training, manpower training, and so on? Once that has been accomplished, should it fall completely under the

responsibility of local school governing bodies or school boards?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Yes. I'm going to try to understand your question. Let's say first that the gouvernement du Québec, at that point, keeps its responsibility for general policies, etc. The school board, as regards secondary level education, both general and vocational, keeps the responsibility that it has today. There is nothing to prevent organizations or mechanisms for consultation between the workplace, the employers, and the schools... That basically does not change what there is here, except that all the funding for manpower is administered by the gouvernement du Québec and everyone fulfils his mandate. It's to avoid policies that are contradictory and/or not coordinated between the two levels of government. We presume that there would be a very clear-cut agreement regarding the responsibilities of the gouvernement du Québec and the school boards, and organizations that would be called upon to establish manpower and manpower training requirements.

**Mr. Proulx:** Do you see it as being important for you to have more power in order to coordinate it at that level too?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** At the local and regional level, yes, definitely. When we talk about assuming greater responsibility, it means that there are two levels, there is a provincial level, there are local levels that are called local but are really regional in the case of the school boards.

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

**Mr. d'Anjou:** This lady would like to add something.

**Mrs. Drouin (Diane):** Perhaps as a part of... Yes, to add something. If I understand your question, I think the answer is yes, the school boards could assume responsibility for manpower training, vocational training in the sense that of course the gouvernement du Québec retains the major policy-making functions, as Mr. d'Anjou said, but the school boards are run by local elected officials, so the people are in a position, in each of the regions, to know the needs of the population, it is their mandate to transmit these needs, to provide services. I think that industries or people who require manpower training can deal directly with the school boards and organize without always having to refer to a general framework, because we know that needs are different in different regions. Needs in Mont-Joli are not the same as in Montréal or Drummondville. At that point, an industry in a given community may have a particular training requirement. I think that within our school

boards, there are the skills needed to meet such needs. When people talk about decentralization, it seems to me to be in that sense. When elected officials... We are capable of taking the public pulse and capable of responding to it. Perhaps... It is certain that at that point we would require appropriate funding. We have to be able to respond financially too.

**Mr. Proulx:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Robert Libman has the floor.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am in strong agreement when you say that the education system should be more decentralized and that local authorities should have more responsibility. That makes a great deal of sense. (10:15)

Also, Mr. d'Anjou, I appreciated your answer to my colleague, Mr. Holden. The challenge facing Québec and the challenge facing every one of us around this table is to establish a balance between collective aspirations and individual rights. But I have two small questions. You state in your brief that you are in favour of linguistic school boards. I thus assumed that if the province converts its confessional school boards into linguistic school boards, you will support the need for a constitutional amendment so that the linguistic school boards are protected in the Constitution?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** I agree. Absolutely. We recommend that the Constitution protect linguistic school boards and also the historic confessional rights of Catholics and Protestants. I think that is very clear.

**Mr. Libman:** O.K. Then you support it. Second, another question. At present, as you know, immigrants whose mother tongue is English, immigrants who come from the United States or England, for example, must attend French schools, according to Bill 101. These are not members of the cultural communities but English-speaking immigrants. They represent about 1 % of the population in the French sector. In the light of the problems that the presence of English in the halls of French schools has given rise to, for example in the CECM, do you believe that these English-speaking immigrants, whose mother tongue is English, from the United States, England, should be authorized to attend school in the English system, where they represent a much-needed 10 %?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** That is a question to be decided by the National Assembly. The National Assembly has already made a decision on the question and we respect that decision. If the

question is eventually reviewed by the National Assembly, we will study it and it is possible that we could express an opinion. But basically, we favour the development of a French Québec, with immigrants' integrating as quickly as possible into Québec's French-speaking society. This is our general policy. I do not think that we can deviate from it. There is, however, a basic difference between the situation of Francophones in Québec, the situation of Francophones outside Québec, and the situation of Anglophones in North America, Québec Anglophones. In the context of North America, the English language is far from being threatened, I think, even in Québec. A question remains to be discussed, however, namely individual rights versus collective rights. We can discuss the issue, we can try to understand each other; but basically I believe that there are measures that need to be taken to protect the French language in North America.

**Mr. Libman:** I am 100 % in favour of that, and it is, as I said, the challenge facing all Quebecers, but the question was simply whether Anglophones, purely Anglophones, who represent 1 % of the French sector, would pose a problem if they were authorized to attend English schools?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** We haven't studied the question. I am unable to give an opinion at this time. I have given you our general policies. Let's just say that society is evolving. The more secure the French language is, the more Quebecers feel they are secure in North America, the more they will be able to move outward, open out to others and be more permissive in various areas. I think that is fundamental too. There is a need to feel secure and as soon as you have that feeling, I think you can be much more open.

**Mr. Libman:** It...

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Things are certainly evolving here in Québec but basically, Quebecers are open-minded and welcoming.

**Mr. Libman:** But I...

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Certain measures had to be taken to protect collective rights, which are important here in Québec.

**Mr. Libman:** As I said, just to wind up, Mr. Chairman, I agree, but the question which I tried to get answered is whether a percentage of 1 % has an effect on the need to protect or provide the cultural security that is necessary in North America; I agree with you, but this 1 % of the French sector, does it have any significant impact?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Well, its impact would be more significant if it were 10 %, I must admit, 10 times as significant. But it remains true that Québec hasn't got control over immigration, and at the present time, that 1 % could change very quickly. There is no guarantee that it will always remain 1 %.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Serge Turgeon now has the floor.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. d'Anjou, it is nonetheless true that we are still left somewhat up in the air about the basic issue. And it is really going to be necessary in this society for people to assume their responsibilities at some point. It can't be left to the politicians alone, for whom I have the greatest respect, to decide about our future all by themselves. Moreover, this Commission is their Commission. They decided to broaden it and are asking us to be a part of it. Some of those politicians also insisted that the Fédération des commissions scolaires be represented at this table. And it was certainly not so that they could remain silent. So I don't really understand that point of view. That is one thing. Another thing: you are very clear, very decisive on the subject of the sectors you claim, and among others, you claim jurisdiction for Québec in matters concerning communications. And you know that the cultural milieu is very sensitive to that issue. What I would say to you is: fine, we will repatriate communications from Ottawa. What do we do, for example, with an organization like the CBC?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** If Québec had jurisdiction, the repatriation we are recommending is jurisdiction over the content of radio broadcasts, instead of a federal agency's having jurisdiction over the content. It is possible that Radio-Canada could continue and that Québec would have jurisdiction over the content.

**Mr. Turgeon:** You mean a sort of Québec CRTC, but it is Ottawa that would have jurisdiction anyway. I don't understand how Ottawa could not have jurisdiction over its content, since it would be responsible for broadcasting.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** When we talk about repatriating communications, we are very much aware that there are international and interprovincial communications and that at that point the federal government will have to keep some jurisdiction over communications. But given the effect that communications have on education and culture, we believe that policies respecting content must be under provincial jurisdiction. That is what we recommend for radio and television stations, etc. It is possible.

Here is an example: there is Québec legislation on advertising directed at children. And that legislation is respected by the CBC and the other media.

**Mr. Turgeon:** But what you picture then is that the CBC will always be Ottawa's business, the CBC's French network, that Ottawa will continue to fund our museums, which are widely used for educational purposes. Do you agree with that? Or that, when we fully repatriate communications totally, and the entire cultural domain, as you say, well, I mean, all that concerns us, and we become the only ones who should make decisions.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** The only ones, preferably.

**Mr. Turgeon:** But that's just it, there is always some case that straddles the two.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Still, it's not a simple issue. I think that when we talk about repatriation as regards communications and culture, I think in particular of content, everything depends on developments from the constitutional point of view. But there are provincial museums and national museums, if you will. Let's say that it is under discussion, it's possible, depending on the amount of change that takes place over the years, in the course of time. It's possible that all cultural instrumentalities and institutions will be under Québec's jurisdiction. It's possible.

**Mr. Turgeon:** So it's not full powers, for example in matters of communications, that you are demanding for Québec.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** We are claiming powers at least over content. That is where there is a cultural impact. At least that much.

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

**Mr. Nicolet:** Mr. Chairman. Three brief questions, Mr. d'Anjou. First, when you talk about regions, just so we can understand one another on the vocabulary, for you, a region means the territory covered by one of your 168 school boards. Is that it?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Yes, and that does not exclude other territorial divisions. It's just that in actuality there are many territorial divisions in Québec, I admit that. But when we are talking from the standpoint of schools, certainly, our boards cover a certain territory. These are regions from the standpoint of education, from the standpoint of schools. But we are not denying the existence of...

**Mr. Nicolet:** No, no, no. I just wanted...

The scale of the region, in your opinion...

**Mr. d'Anjou:** That's it.

**Mr. Nicolet:** ...Is the scale of the territory covered by your school boards.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Yes.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Second question, just as brief. I would like to congratulate the school board on the role it has described in regard to integration of new immigrants. I think that it is a clear and extremely interesting statement about taking charge by the educational milieu, and I congratulate you.

However, it seems to me, and Montréal's experience in this matter is convincing, that there is a sort of critical mass as far as the number of children who can be integrated into a given environment without upsetting the overall context. I wonder if you have considered this in regard to the problem. In the regions, it is less of a problem, but sooner or later we could find ourselves faced with the same kind of problem in the regions you represent.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Yes. This is why we are disturbed by the superimposition of confessional and language structures on the island of Montreal. It is very clear in our brief. We believe that this superimposition of structures within the same territory does not encourage integration of immigrants and this is why we are advocating a constitutional amendment that would enable existing confessional school boards to evolve towards a linguistic status, provided the Constitution protects the right to have French-language boards, English-language boards, the rights of Catholics and Protestants to religious instruction in school in accordance with Québec's history, and parental wishes, all the while respecting the rights of others, the freedom of conscience of everyone.

**Mr. Nicolet:** One last question, and you will permit me to go back a little to our disagreement of last spring. You express yourselves very clearly in favour of local financing, which, in reply to my colleague, Mr. Beaumier, you have qualified as possibly being centred mainly in the property field, possibly coming from other sources.

This being understood, and recognizing on the other hand that the State has a responsibility for justice, for allocation of public education services, is there, in your mind, some ceiling that you are ready to recognize with respect to local financing versus the financing that the State must make available to schools for education?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Certainly. We have not

advocated that the State remove itself from the field of school-board financing. I do not think it would be realistic to advocate any such thing. Certainly, I said just now that there is a limit to the ability of people to pay all kinds of taxes. This is true for property taxes as it is for others. I also said that if we wish to transfer additional responsibilities, not only to the school level, but also to the municipal level, we will also have to transfer new revenue sources; it is unthinkable that the property tax field can pay for the considerable additional obligations from the financial standpoint. Over and above that, no. I think we are going to reach agreement quickly.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. André Ouellet now has the floor.  
(10:30 a.m.)

**Mr. Ouellet:** Mr. Chairman, I would certainly like to congratulate Mr. d'Anjou and the ladies and gentlemen who accompanied him, who presented this morning, I believe, a very serious brief, very comprehensive, with a series of recommendations to give school boards a larger role and increased importance in Québec that seems to me to be completely opportune. My father, who was very active in the schools for over 20 years or so as a commissioner and chairman of the school board, would certainly support some of the recommendations that you have made this morning.

There is one sentence that I would like to quote from your brief, on page 6, where you say: "We feel it is vital to at least maintain the ratio of French-speaking citizens in Canada. Only adequate Francophone immigration can help to maintain the relative proportion." It is clear, as you know, that Francophone immigration is difficult, and for several years the governments of Canada and Québec have been signing agreements to encourage Québec's Francophone immigration policies. You quote elsewhere the Cullen-Couture agreement of 1978, the agreement between the Canadian minister Mr. Cullen and the Québec minister Mr. Couture; this was not the first agreement, that goes back to the early 1970s when the Trudeau government had already signed the first agreements on this subject with the Bourassa government. The Québec ministers of the day were Mr. Cloutier, followed by Mr. Bienvenue; for the Trudeau government, I believe it was Mr. Andras. This shows there has been a recognition, through administrative arrangements, for quite some time, for the encouragement of such Francophone immigration.

I agree with you that this must be continued and I sincerely hope (unfortunately all this could have been included in the Constitution by the Meech Lake Accord - I am sorry, I supported this failed initiative) I hope anyway that the Canadian government will shortly be able to revive and renew this agreement on



immigration with the government of Québec.

This brings me to a question for you: Apart from this Francophone immigration to Québec there is, you say, the mass, the ratio of French-speaking people in Canada, and this, in my opinion, is also an important dimension. This is why I ask myself some questions about your proposals to eliminate the type of responsibility in the areas of training, culture and communications that already exists in the Canadian government. I will remind Mrs. Côté and Mr. Turgeon that the Government of Canada spends large amounts on education, not only in Québec but across Canada, to promote the French language. How many teachers, Quebecers, French-speakers are there, who find employment, who are working in the provinces and who are teaching French, to be added to the number of people working and protecting that which you call the large number of French-speakers across Canada?

I wish to remind Mr. Turgeon that the artists, creative people, composers, musicians — you are president of the Union des artistes — there are many who can barely make ends meet, as you know...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Ouellet, I must remind you that the preamble will be such as to leave no ambiguity.

**Mr. Ouellet:** I'm almost finished.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The preamble should be over quickly.

**Mr. Ouellet:** All right. This reminds me of what my friend Larose said yesterday when he used all his time to make a passionate attack.

**Mr. Larose:** And very realistic!

**The Chairman (Mr. Bélanger):** You two keep strange company!

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

**Mr. Ouellet:** I remind you that the National Film Board and Radio-Canada, very fortunately, support some of those artists. And what is done is not just for Québec; it's for all of Canada. These are large amounts...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Nevertheless, Mr. Ouellet, your 10 minutes are up.

**Mr. Ouellet:** My question is as follows: How can you propose a complete repatriation of these powers without running counter to this recommendation that you are making; that you want the French-speaking people in Canada to continue to be important? Because I have no

illusions that if all this is repatriated to Québec, the government of Québec will have many priorities other than the financing of a radio or television station in British Columbia.

**The Chairman (Mr. Bélanger):** Mr. d'Anjou, you have a very short time to suggest an answer to the question.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** You come to my assistance! I really believe that Québec would be able to conclude agreements with the other provinces. The Canadian government may decide, just the same, to serve the Francophone minorities as we serve the Anglophone minorities in Québec. I wonder whether we couldn't trade that, deal for deal, a kind of reciprocity. For me, everything in this area is possible; but we learned last evening of the status of Francophone minorities outside Québec. The picture is not rosy, you know, in spite of the federal government's efforts. What has actually happened over the course of history, even though the federal government had some jurisdiction, is that when the federal government passed a remedial law or wanted to intervene, the provinces didn't take them very seriously and that's too bad. Perhaps this is why the minorities outside Québec have considerable difficulties in spite of all the efforts made.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Well, thank you. The time allocated to members of the Commission is now long used up and we are going to move on to questions from the government party. Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. d'Anjou, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, in the name of the government, welcome to this Commission. Thank you for having agreed to appear today. You have made an interesting presentation. You were quite right, Mr. d'Anjou, to stress the importance of the brief you presented, not only for its content, but also for its representativeness, seeing that school boards have existed for 150 years and that you are the elected representatives. You are an elected government for education and it is especially interesting to hear you, just as it is especially interesting, Mr. d'Anjou, to have you as a member of this Commission. If you were not seated on this Commission, this Commission would be less representative of Québec society.

You have been privileged to experience something today that few of us are going to experience. You have been privileged to answer questions today, and you will be privileged to ask them this afternoon or tomorrow. Remember those who question you today. Perhaps they will come back one day in your role. But this is only to tell you that your brief is particularly interesting. You are proposing a rearrangement of legislative powers that is very interesting to me: culture, immigration, communications,

manpower training.

But on one particularly important point, Mr. d'Anjou, the relationship between education and the choice of language and the choice of religion, you appear, if you will allow me, to be running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. We know very well that sometimes we don't see the wolf. Section 93. On page 11 of your brief you mention that Section 93 of the Canadian Constitution grants, however, some protection to the Catholic and Protestant minorities. And you state: "We believe that the constitutional right to Catholic and Protestant religious education and to moral instruction must be preserved." Are you in favour of keeping Section 93 or would it not be necessary to abolish this section of the Constitution entirely?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** We believe, Mr. Rémillard, that it would be necessary to amend this section, but not completely abolish it. We believe that constitutional protection, insofar as Québec is concerned, must be of two types: first, linguistic protection that would be clearly established, where Québec has Anglophone school boards and Francophone school boards. We want the rights of the Anglophones recognized. The second constitutional protection, in our view, which would be a change that, in place of protecting confessional structures, would include the historic rights of Catholics and Protestants, knowing what the people want, what the parents want; the Catholic and Protestant religions could be taught in the schools according to the wishes of parents, and of students, depending on their age.

**Mr. Rémillard:** What if at that time Section 93 of the Canadian Constitution were abolished and more specific provisions on education were added to the Québec Charter of Individual Rights and Freedoms?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** That could be considered. I would have to verify the conditions for amending the Charter of Rights.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Permit me one last question. You have also proposed, and this is a very interesting aspect of your brief, new responsibilities for school boards. Mrs. Drouin just spoke about manpower training. What she has told us is very interesting. In your brief you also speak about welcoming immigrants. Two new responsibilities that you would like to receive. On immigration matters you are once more not clear in your brief. Should this be in Québec's jurisdiction exclusively or is it not also shared with the federal government in certain respects? As for welcoming immigrants, what do you mean by "welcoming" and what would be the function of the school boards with respect to welcoming?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** On the question of jurisdiction, we advocate the widest possible jurisdiction over immigration for Québec in matters of numbers of immigrants and the choice of immigrants. When we speak of welcoming, welcoming is receiving immigrants in their neighbourhood schools, to give them language courses and all the additional services that immigrants need. In short, the immigrants reception centre should, as I see it, be located in the neighbourhood schools so that the parents arriving with young children are in contact with the school, the school is able to provide services, and in our opinion, that would greatly encourage integration of immigrants into Québec society.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Christos Sirros.

**Mr. Sirros:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. d'Anjou, as you suspected, we are going to talk a little about aboriginal peoples. You mentioned the subject in your proposal, you speak of it a little on page 4. Perhaps I might begin by asking the following question: Should I understand and do I understand correctly from the tone of this section, that you hope to see, even in the present context, no matter what the future constitutional context may be, including the one we have now, a type of transfer of responsibilities from the federal government to Québec regarding education, more particularly with respect to aboriginal peoples?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Yes. I think that aboriginal peoples must be regarded as Québec citizens in every sense of the word. We respect their culture. We would agree to their managing their own school boards, to their language be taught in their schools, but the other language, aside from their maternal language, which should be taught is French. When that happens, we believe that aboriginal peoples, like other Quebecers, would have to have democratic educational institutions and that such institutions would have to come under the Québec government.  
(10:45 a.m.)

**Mr. Sirros:** We could agree, I think, on the fact that education and schools are probably the most important mechanisms for transmission of culture that a society can provide. In this regard, the need to ensure such cultural survival for the aboriginal peoples being fundamental, can you elaborate a little on what you mean. In your brief, you also speak of jurisdiction, that Québec must also have jurisdiction over school matters. You just said we need a system that closely resembles what we have here. To what point are you ready to consider adaptations or transfers to the aboriginal peoples? When you speak of managing schools, is this a... can you be a little more explicit?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** I believe that aboriginal communities would be able to manage their schools and, education being a provincial jurisdiction, I don't see why, when it comes to the aboriginal peoples, it should be a matter for the federal government. There are currently two aboriginal school boards in Québec: Cree and Kativik; why not extend this to the whole territory?

**Mr. Sirros:** Are you ready to consider formulas other than this one, based perhaps on a model differing from what we have elsewhere in Québec, but corresponding to...

**Mr. d'Anjou:** We can consider others. Let's say that perhaps the aboriginal peoples would have the final word about that, depending on their customs, but I think, from what I have heard up to now, that they truly wish to manage their institutions.

**Mr. Sirros:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Guy Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Mr. d'Anjou, you speak of this propensity of the federal government for doing indirectly what it cannot do directly and you propose a whole series of powers for repatriation to Québec to correct this somewhat, for example, in the area of manpower, where you offer your services as well, in communications, in immigration, etc., thus, an increase in powers, if you will, for the school boards. In such a context, in such an eventuality, what kind of ties could exist between your school boards and the MRCs?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** There are possible ties. Certainly... First, there is no similarity of territory, but there will certainly be the need for adjustments. I think, before considering that, we would perhaps have to consider municipal amalgamations. We would also have to ensure that the demographic representation in the MRCs is established proportionally, considering the number of people and the amounts paid to the MRCs. I think that over and above this, there may be adjustments to be made, but we don't object to the idea that one day school boards will be represented in the MRCs as local governments for education. I think there is a need for cooperation by the municipalities and the school boards, and there are already many agreements at the local level, but I don't think that school boards object to working with the municipalities at the regional level.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** My colleague, Russell Williams, has a question.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Williams, you have the floor.

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You have criticized the role of the federal government. You have discussed the question of overlapping jurisdiction. In your brief you have also criticized the central role of our provincial government, but you have mentioned that you wish to have 100 % control at the provincial level. You have asked for a new division of responsibilities with the school boards. I am trying to understand your exact position. On page 9, you stated, "We ask for increased responsibilities for school boards in managing education and this means constitutional guarantees". I know that you have already answered several questions like this, but what exactly are you trying to say? When you speak of the future, what division do you wish? And also, when you speak of the constitution, are you referring to the Canadian Constitution or another constitution?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** I am going to answer your last question right away: It's either one or the other. Clearly the division of responsibilities between the government responsible for education, which is the government of Québec, and local authorities, which are the educational school boards...

**Mr. Williams:** But for the future of Québec...

**Mr. d'Anjou:** For the future, that this...

**Mr. Williams:** ...do you think it is better to put this responsibility at one level or the other?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** This responsibility... No, it depends on the responsibility. When we speak of the division of powers, it depends on the nature of the responsibilities and the nature of the powers. We acknowledge the importance of the responsibilities and powers of the Québec government with respect to education, and particularly those of the ministère de l'Éducation, certainly.

But this is a philosophical and managerial question, I think. Making the local levels responsible is to give them more responsibilities, more decision-making powers and leave them room to manoeuvre so they may better react to the particular needs of the people in a given community. This requires financial leeway, and also leeway at the decision-making level. It's a philosophical question; it's a question of operating efficiency, perhaps to eliminate some a priori controls and replace them with a posteriori controls. We obviously wish to consider management of the state's money, of course, but there are many ways to do it. I

think that we can considerably simplify the controls and reduce costs by giving the local level greater responsibility. Mr. Paradis would like to add something on this subject.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** If Mr. Paradis adds something, you won't have any time left, Mr. Williams. But go ahead, Mr. Paradis, if... The witnesses are here to be heard.

**Mr. Paradis (Fernand):** It is interesting to look at the evolution of the school system over the past 30 years. There has been, year after year or every five years, a centralization of power, which has led at the same time to a removal of local responsibility. If a harsh criticism of the school boards can be made, I have lived through it for 40 years, it is this ongoing elimination of responsibility that has occurred. So that today education makes its presence felt locally less than was the case 30 or 40 years ago. In the past, we teachers and school principals knew that our bosses, those responsible for education, were the people at the school board. And, over the years, the central power or Québec having taken over the collective agreements, and all forms of control, and so in one stroke, the school boards have become a little more out of the picture. If we wish education to be integrated locally, we must give the school boards back significant powers, significant decision-making powers, which will produce education that is not just the concern of the State or a few people, but the concern of the local community. It appears to me essential that we correct the situation and, most of all, that we consolidate rights in the Constitution.

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

**Mr. Campeau:** Mr. d'Anjou, following Mr. Béland's question just a moment ago - Mr. Nicolet also spoke of it - I would like to speak to you about spending powers, taxing powers. I speak perhaps as a citizen and let's come down to earth, as a taxpayer. First, there's nothing to worry about... Every time you receive, in education, money from the federal or provincial government, it doesn't fall like manna from heaven. If they have the power to give you money, it's because they take it out of your pocket. It is not a gift when you look at it this way. Next, you appear on the scene and tax us again. As a citizen, I find there is an imbalance in this that I cannot explain and I say to myself, "I have the impression that I am being taxed three times. To that I add... In this room, someone was saying the other day - someone seemed to say - that the more government we have, the better protected we are. When I have paid my four tax bills, federal, provincial, municipal and school, I don't feel any better

protected.

**A voice:** ...urban community.

**Mr. Campeau:** Someone is talking of the urban community, but anyway... Let's say I forgot one. How do you see... In the past, we even had some relief from school taxes. It seemed to me that my tax bill was lower. Today it seems to me that it has gone up. So, as citizens, we are always caught off-balance; we don't know where the money comes from or where it goes. Do you see any solution for this so that things are clear and we know exactly what we are paying for schools and what we are paying for other things?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Not more protected, but you are more governed. Governments have to be paid for.

**Mr. Campeau:** Fine, you say "governed"... yes, with my money.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Oh yes, I agree. It's always with your money. No, I think there is a balance that must be established between the various revenue sources. When you look at the picture in... the United States and Ontario, we find that the proportion of school board revenues coming from taxes is higher than in Québec. I think that to finance any program, the government has choices. It can increase the sales tax as is done, it can levy new taxes, GST, etc.; it can increase the tax on corporations and companies; it can increase taxes for individuals. In a word, it is a matter of establishing a reasonable balance between the various taxation sources, and enabling Québec to remain competitive, internationally and even interprovincially. So these are the government choices. We do not make such choices. What we wish, clearly, is an autonomous revenue source and we wish to have enough leeway so we can make decisions in the local interest. This will vary from place to place. I think it is important for the school boards to have financial room to manoeuvre. This is what enables us to finance decisions that meet the particular needs of a community, needs that traditionally the government has never financed.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you Mr. d'Anjou, I think the requirements of openness and frankness vis-à-vis the members of the Commission forces me to say that the Chair has gone over its allotted time and now we will turn to the Opposition party.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. First allow me to welcome the Fédération des commissions scolaires catholiques du Québec and Mr. Rémillard said how pleased he was to have its chairman here. We should ask the technician

at the back about that. I also told Mr. d'Anjou that he will have the pleasure of joining the members of this Commission in making recommendations on the future of Québec.

Your brief is particularly interesting. I had an opportunity to talk a little with Mr. d'Anjou yesterday about various points, among them the number of powers that should be exclusive to Québec. Mrs. Côté just touched on this a little while ago. When I read your brief I believed I understood that the specifications you wished to find in the Constitution would be adequate in a Québec constitution, of a sovereign Québec. I tried to examine it in this light and it's interesting. Do you think that your proposals regarding the contents of the Constitution would be adequate to guarantee the historic rights of Anglophones, Francophones, and religious rights as well? And with these hoped-for powers, would this be adequate in a Québec constitution, of a sovereign Québec?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** It would be adequate in any constitution, Madam.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** So it would be adequate? Fine, that is... you speak of powers and you advance the hypothesis that the neighbourhood school should be the one that welcomes both adults and children. I find that particularly interesting. I find that truly that... and it's feasible. It's feasible without increased powers. It's merely a question of reorienting our system a little, but you go very far into the powers that should be conferred on Québec. Please allow me a brief history. In 1920, more precisely on a sunny November 23, 1920, it will be 70 years ago in a few days, Mr. Taschereau denounced the federal government's meddling in public education - we called it public instruction back then. In 1953, Mr. Duplessis got a federal grant for education, which allowed him to set his priorities. In 1966, Daniel Johnson denounced the interference of the federal government in the adult education sector and affirmed Québec's rights in continuing education. Jean-Jacques Bertrand, in 1968, called for the withdrawal of the federal government from the educational radio sector, which you spoke of briefly. In 1971, it was Mr. Castonguay who demanded priority, even exclusivity in legislating on social policy, which in his view, clearly included professional training, and this was in January 1971.

So my question is simple... 70 years... Do you think we still stand a chance of seeking additional powers and if so, how?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Whether we have a chance is hard to predict but I think that we must have very clear positions and then the people, the population will judge. Personally, I think that Québec has particular wishes that must be recognized by the rest of Canada. It is very

clear that we have needs, we are taking firm positions on them. We don't believe that what is needed by Québec to fulfil itself as a society must be uniform for the rest of Canada if this is not what they want. But I think that our positions must be clear, we are establishing them.

(11:00 a.m.)

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Fine, but taking into account the failure of Meech Lake and, most important, Mr. Trudeau's amending formula, not to give it a name, which put a triple lock on any chance of modifying the Canadian Constitution, what do you seriously think the chances are of getting something? When they have refused less, why would they accept more? And my second question, because I have colleagues who are going to want to intervene, the other question is this: Do you plan to consult on the Commission's conclusions?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** The chances for change, I think that at this time, we must first establish what we want, and we will see the reaction. Now, are we going to consult? It is not up to me alone to decide this, it will be a matter for the board of directors. But it is hard for local governments, such as school boards, for example, because school boards are not just school commissioners, they are also parents. If we truly wish to consult all the parties that make up a school board, it means we practically hold a Québec-wide referendum, we will cover the whole territory. So, I don't think it is our role to do this. I think that our role as specialists in education is to tell you: For the future of Québec, the school boards have a role to play; education is important, is vital; the changes that we are recommending are those which we have put forward to you to the best of our ability. Our mandate goes only this far.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Mr. d'Anjou, you are a member of this Commission, and you know my interest in education; so for me, the voice of the world of education is important. You will have a decision to make with us soon.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Yes.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Are you telling me that there is a chance that the Canadian Constitution can be successfully amended; would this not just recognize those powers that you believe to be indispensable in the sectors you mentioned, namely, immigration, communications, professional training? Seriously, we're talking as one Quebecer to another, here, we know what they did to Meech, we know what they did to Bill 101, we know what they did to all the bills, the legislation affecting school structures. So, just between us, here, do you believe there are still possible avenues leading to amendments, renewed

federalism? Because you are one of us here.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Yes, but at this moment, I speak in the name of the school boards of Québec and with the mandate that I have. And I must hold to that mandate. Personally, I think we must establish our goals clearly, where we want to go, and we will see what the reactions of the other side are. Certainly these reactions are going to have a greater influence on the decisions of the people. That's how I see things.

**Mr. Gendron:** Mr. d'Anjou, I would like to continue for the five minutes remaining to me. I congratulate you for affirming loudly and clearly that you hope Québec exercises exclusive control over training, culture and communications, but you have enough experience and common sense, in any case, so I thought, to have noted that if one reads the Constitution it says education is a provincial responsibility. In the real world, you know well that it's not so, even if Mr. Ouellet told us that the federal government pays. Everyone knows this, but I contend that it wastes the money. It spends, but it also wastes a lot. He didn't say much about the waste, because, with the two tiers, with... All he has to do is come to my office. I'm next door to the CFP and so it goes and I want to hear what you have to say. There is much waste, money spent uselessly in duplication, as you said. I have one question. How can you continue to assert what our reality should be and have such a slim hope of believing that... because you said: I am not against federal spending power, but it should be limited, and carried out by transfers. Since that has never been done in our jurisdiction as we wished, why do you restate the same proposal, without proposing changes in the constitutional structures in which we live?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** I did say that in the framework of the existing Constitution, if it continues to go in the same direction, I would see a spending power that would be strictly a power to equalize spending, if you will, where there would be transfers to the provinces and the provinces would be masters of their programs instead of there being federal programs that impose some constraints on the provinces. There is a big difference. There are provincial programs and if there are transfers of tax points, and the formula or the equalization are of little importance, then we cannot turn down the federal government's making payments to the provinces as long as there are no conditions attached.

**Mr. Gendron:** Yes, but according to you, Mr. d'Anjou, why do you think the federal government does what it does instead of doing what it should do and how that would change anything to affirm what we've experienced for

the past 20 years, that this should be an exclusive field of activity, and is this not the case? In reaffirming it, do we settle the matter?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** No. It will not settle the matter. We must also take a stand on what we want for Québec, things that we believe will work. After that, there will be other steps to be taken. I would like to say that right now, for our part, we are telling you how we see the needs of Québec education and how we believe that exclusive jurisdiction should remain in Québec and we believe that education includes manpower training.

**Mr. Gendron:** I think you are absolutely right, except that for me the difference is I don't think I can affirm what we should do for another 20 years. I say that we've said it all, and you know it. I've heard you say this many many times. I'm surprised to have to say it again, without taking advantage of the situation, so as not to leave things hanging. I say that your brief is very good, but it leaves one loose end because it contains no decision on a matter that I regard as essential. I can't say that I have a mandate to criticize without offering alternatives because that would take too long. It's not that I am in more of a hurry than the others. It's because I feel that at a certain point you have to move on.

I would like to put the other question to you and my time will be up. You have touched upon the subject of decentralization. I sincerely congratulate you. One of the major problems with the school structure is that it has become too centralized, particularly during the past five years. You have reiterated this all along to an excellent Minister, but one who believes in centralization according to you.

My question is: Do you not believe that the premise with a little more chance of guaranteeing decentralization is full possession of all powers? It seems to me that this is one of the premises having the best chance for decentralization if all powers are exercised by one level of government that decides to decentralize. Do you agree with this?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Decentralizing a greater responsibility to the school boards is something we have also been requesting for years, and it has not completely happened yet. I think that the precise task of the Commission is to make clear recommendations on this. Within the limits of its mandate, each organization makes representations. I think that it is up to the members of the Commission to study and discuss them, and to make definite...

**Mr. Gendron:** Are you saying, and here I finish, Mr. d'Anjou, that you are going to do

this as a member of this Commission?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Yes, as a member of this...

**Mr. Gendron:** As a recommendation from the Fédération, as a member of the Commission you are going to go much, much further.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** As a member of the Commission I am going to participate fully in the discussions and I will have the opportunity to express my opinions, personal then, but there is a difference between expressing one's personal opinions and, within one's mandate, presenting a brief in the name of the Fédération.

**Mr. Gendron:** I have been told I have two minutes remaining. I would like to use them, Mr. d'Anjou. I will continue with one last question. I was especially taken with the closing remarks of your brief. You say you wish to enjoy greater stability in your structures, and here I quote, "so that at last we can deal with our real mission, the quality of education in Québec".

My question is the following: How does the desire of your Fédération to have constitutional guarantees such as the power to levy taxes interfere or affect the quality of the education you wish to provide? You well know that a very large part of the financial support comes from Québec and has no direct relation to what is offered in education. In any event, if you were given the power, you well know that through transfer mechanisms, because you have just experienced this, you asked for this, the power to tax, and you see where that led, they stopped paying for school equipment. So then, do you think this would be a solution to improve the quality of education?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** There are not just the direct services to the student, the actual educational services. I said this afternoon that there are some services that the public demands and that are by tradition provided by the school boards, things such as noontime cafeteria services, transportation of students at lunchtime, etc., supplementary activities which have never been financed by the government and which require an autonomous source of revenue for the school boards. But the fact of continuously being subject to modifications of the structure, to integration, to amalgamation, etc., is an enormous drain on energies, not only on the part of the commissioners, but also on the staff of the school boards. While all this work is going on, there is less time to devote to our mission, which is really to improve the quality of education. It's a little like what happens when there are too many controls; too much time is lost, as, for example, for school principals, with the increase in the number of advisory committees, etc. This is not the principal's main

task. Consultation is not a bad thing, but with limited resources, there remain the tasks of administering a school, managing staff, evaluating the quality of teaching, all of which require a fair amount of time. And when you spend your time on administrative or advisory tasks, you are not doing your main job. We must be very aware of this.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you Mr. d'Anjou. This ends the time allocated for this presentation. I must extend my warmest thanks to Mr. d'Anjou, Mrs. Drouin, Mrs. Lemieux, Mr. Sabourin, Mr. Beaudin, Mr. Paradis and the Fédération des commissions scolaires catholiques du Québec for this interesting brief and for the manner in which they presented it. I would ask you to move as quickly as possible into the anteroom, where members of the Commission wishing to congratulate you may join you, so that the next group may take your place while the chairs are still warm.

I ask the members of the delegation representing the Association québécoise des organismes régionaux de concertation et de développement to please take their places at the presenters' table.

Welcome to the Association québécoise des organismes régionaux de concertation et de développement. Mr. Ménard, I believe, is the president of the Association. I remind you that for such a presentation we are allowing you ten minutes to summarize and present your brief, which each Commission member has received and read, and I would ask you to begin by introducing the members of your group. Mr. Ménard.

#### **Association québécoise des organismes régionaux de concertation et de développement**

**Mr. Ménard (Pierre):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Here then are the members sitting with me. On my far left, Mrs. Andrée Saint-Georges, member of the executive of our organization; on my left, next to me, Mr. Janvier Cliche, vice-president of the organization; next to me, on the right, Mr. John Redmond, senior vice-president of the organization; and on the far right, Mr. Normand Thériault, director general of the organization.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, the Association québécoise des organismes régionaux de concertation et de développement is pleased to participate in the work of this Commission. The regional interests which we are defending are strongly linked with the national issue that concerns all of us in Québec. Allow me to remind the members of this Commission that the AQORCD comprises all the regional cooperation and development organizations which pursue regional development objectives and organize regional socioeconomic conferences in

every region of Québec. Their members cover the entire spectrum of political and socioeconomic life in their regions.  
(11:15 a.m.)

You can well understand the importance an association like ours places on a dialogue with the Commission. In our view, any decision on Québec's future would be incomplete if it did not include thoughts on the role to be played by the regions in the new power structure.

We would like to draw your attention to the regions' past experience with both levels of government when it comes to regional development policies and action. I need not remind anyone that the two levels of government have never succeeded in harmonizing their policies and action in matters of regional development.

First of all, looking at regional development in Québec, one might have the impression that it all began in the Lower-St. Lawrence region in the early 1960s. But it should be remembered that what prompted this first Québec involvement in regional development was vigorous regional action and that the federal government followed suit. It would seem that Québec has always sought to coordinate its regional development action with that of its initial partners but has never totally succeeded. The 1970s were dominated by attempts at technocratic planning of regional development. However, because Québec lacked the political will to mobilize the sectorial ministries and draw them into the process, these regional planning efforts ended in failure.

It was in 1983 that regional socioeconomic conferences were created, bringing community representatives and developers together before the government which made the commitments. Today, we are taking stock of these attempts at concerted action. According to a recent survey of our members, nearly 80 % of respondents feel that the current conference formula should be kept, on condition that it be modified. Our members feel that the summits on regional development have had little impact, and the majority are dissatisfied with government commitments.

In 1969, one year after the creation of the Office de planification et de développement du Québec, the federal government created the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. Over the next two decades, to substantiate its action, the federal government initiated several Canada-Québec joint agreements. In the early 1980s, the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion insisted on the need to incorporate the objectives of federal regional development programs and policies into the so-called national policies. For all intents and purposes, this spelled the end of federal regional development policy in the strict sense of the term. It does not, however, prevent the federal government

from intervening directly on specific occasions in one region or another of Québec, depending on the economic situation.

What lessons or conclusions can be drawn from the regions' experience with the regional development policies of the two levels of government?

To be sure, both levels of government did participate in regional development, but they did so in a competitive, uncoordinated manner. This does not mean, however, that the regions did not derive some benefit from government action or from the mechanisms created. On occasion, the regions even benefited from the competition between the two levels of government.

What we can also see is that neither of the two levels of government was willing to give the regions all the tools they needed. Of the two, Québec expressed greater intentions. But reality tells another story. Today, in the context of concerted action on the future of Québec and - as we see it - the future of the regions, it is clear that the debate on decentralization and regional development, which has too often been cut short, should be allowed to run its course. The main objective, namely correcting disparities and inequities has obviously not been attained. On the other hand, it is becoming more and more difficult to manage the social programs established in the 1960s and 1970s. Under the circumstances, the issue of development for all regions of Québec remains a concern and is more relevant than ever.

This is a major challenge for us, as well as for you, as we attempt to determine Québec's political and constitutional future. The specific nature of the problems encountered by the regions places new constraints on the process. The task is not an easy one.

We will try to supply some elements of reflection. No longer can we simply wish for coordinated action between the two levels of government. We must think about returning decision-making powers to Québec in matters of regional development, but not at just any price. A look back on involvement by the two levels of government has made us better understand that the tools needed for regional development have remained either in Québec City or in Ottawa and that neither has succeeded in making optimal use of its powers. The only possible solution is to negotiate a distribution of powers and resources between the government and the regions.

A new, more independent Québec must not preclude the emergence of a regional Québec. In other words, and in more colourful terms, we maintain that a change in Québec's constitutional status should not simply mean that the regions will be able to go on bended knee to one pilgrimage site instead of two. Should centralization continue into the future, it would be better to leave it at two pilgrimage sites: that



way, at least you have a better chance at a miracle.

So, there is one prerequisite before the regions can have the tools they need and be in a position to use them autonomously and efficiently: namely, the regional level must acquire a more solid, better recognized political and institutional existence, one which would make it a true partner of the government. We have carried on this debate with certain principles in mind and we wish to see the Commission adhere to these principles. With regard to basic hypotheses, allow us to suggest the idea of a regional government, or of a regional board or deputation. The idea of a regional government immediately runs up against resistance. But if you recall, in 1987 the Rochon Commission on health and social services proposed that universally elected regional boards be created. Reaction from the two main political parties in Québec was immediate: No way. But would this be a less categorical "No" today, three years later, if all sectors of activity were represented by such a regional body?

For this hypothesis of a regional government to become more plausible, it may be necessary to approach it gradually. Here, we're talking about a regional board formula akin to that which the Régie de la santé et des services sociaux is going to institute. We're also thinking about regional deputation, which presupposes a revision of the parliamentary system. This revision should be done with the aim of giving new value to the status, power and role of elected representatives and with a view to a new partnership between the government and the regions.

Before ending this presentation, we would like to repeat the conclusion of our brief. Once Québec has made its choices, and once it has come out of the political and constitutional imbroglio that reduces its capacity for action, it will have to begin sharing some powers with its regions. So, we recommend: that exclusive powers in matters of regional development be returned to Québec, and that the determination of the political and constitutional future of Québec include provisions regarding the status and role of the regional level.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the future of Québec cannot be envisaged without taking into account the future of the regions. Thank you for your attention.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Ménard, for this excellent summarized presentation. Let's proceed with the questions of the Commission members. We'll begin with Mrs. Campbell Steer.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** I found your presentation very interesting. I agree with you that regional development remains a problem for

everyone. Since, in everyday life, I work mainly in the financing of industrial projects, that is, projects of Québec firms as well as foreign companies, I have three questions I would like to ask.

To what extent do you think that a new regional level could correct the imbalance that exists between the levels of investment in major centres or nearby, or reduce competition between the regions? Wouldn't "one-stop shopping" for Québec as a whole be preferable? To what extent do you think you could, with direct subsidies from whatever source, encourage industrial investments? Is it infrastructures, or is it subsidies that encourage investment? As the expression goes, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." In any event, isn't this question likely to become academic in light of the free-trade agreement and its impact on subsidies? You may begin wherever you like.

**Mr. Ménard:** Thank you. You seem to equate regional development with economic development. Economic development is one aspect of regional development. Regional development is much broader. Ultimately, it is the total development of every sector across an entire region. The idea advocated in our brief is not... Perhaps, in your question, this was transformed into the idea of another level of government. The idea is not to add another level but to enable the regions to take charge of their development. In fact, what we are saying is: The decisional centre is too remote; in matters of regional development, it is important that powers be as close to the base as possible. It was with that in mind, and for that reason that we did not include in our brief a specific mechanism, since we didn't want to start a debate on the particular workings of one type of structure as opposed to another. Our essential message is: The decision-making levels must be as close as possible to those who will be affected; regional development must be endogenous, that is, it must grow from within and, for that reason, the regions must have the necessary development tools. The more remote the decisional centres, the more we are likely to have problems with programs that are not tailor-made, and find that there are no programs fully adapted to the needs at hand.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** And which do not correspond.

**Mr. Ménard:** But let me get to the other part of your question. For us, it is not a matter of giving the regional government the power to manage subsidies. There are specialized organizations whose job is to deal with economic development and we are not necessarily looking to take their place; I'm talking about every aspect of regional development. A region should

have much more control over its own fate. For us, this depends, among other things, on establishing regional budgets from which the regions could make their choices, establish their priorities and not have to continue negotiating in a piecemeal manner, bit by bit. That, more than anything, is the overall involvement we mean, but at a more specific level of economic development. In that respect, there are national bodies that can remain and we don't necessarily have to throw a spanner in the works by adding a pseudo-regional level. It was not meant in that sense at all.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** My fear was that there might be a certain competition between the regions. If we take a foreign company coming to us and saying: I'd like to establish my plant somewhere, it would be very difficult for this investor to invest if he had to make the rounds. What you're trying to say is that you would rather be consulted on the budget package allocated to each of the regions.

**Mr. Ménard:** I will be very frank with you, and I may seem a bit blunt to the members of the National Assembly sitting at this table. I would rather see this kind of competition between regions than be at the political mercy of a sectorial minister who decides where an industry is going to be established. I do think that competition, healthy competition, between the regions would be much more creative and more equitable than what we are currently seeing.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Do I have time for an answer to the other question, or have we exhausted the subject?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Yes, you still have time, as long as you are not interrupted.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Thank you. I only wanted to ask what you thought was going to happen with the clarification of the term subsidy in light of the free-trade agreement? Because we may lose the possibility of encouraging investment through subsidies.  
(11:30 a.m.)

**Mr. Ménard:** Yes, that's it. I touched on that indirectly earlier. For us, it is more than just a question of subsidies. I believe that, in the context of free-trade, we must have the ability to act, not necessarily with regard to grants, but when it comes to establishing a framework. The further we get from decisional powers, the more the models will tend to be pan-Québécois, the more certain regions will find it difficult to adapt to the dynamics or specific problems that may occur because of free-trade. What we need is a much more regional context,

to which we can adapt our own models and ways of doing things.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Charles-Albert Poissant.

**Mr. Poissant:** Along the same lines, one thought that immediately comes to my mind is that the free-trade agreement contains a provision whereby Ottawa and Washington will not provide subsidies since it would mean favouring industry in general as opposed to local industry. However, the regions would seem to be an exception, so American states could do so, as could Québec. Matane is a case in point, it was difficult, but a subsidy was finally granted, although it was much debated in the American Senate and Congress.

Now, if it should happen that, in the agreement, Québec is no longer a separate state or a province, but a country, we might have to look at this seriously. I had never thought about it, but it is very relevant, something which we will have to look into when it is decided. It was not part of my question in any case, but I would like to reserve that question for myself. On page 7 of your brief, line 5, you state that powers in matters of regional development should be returned to Québec but not at any price. What would be an acceptable price and what would be unacceptable?

**Mr. Ménard:** Before replying to that question, I would like to answer the question you were asking yourself.

**Mr. Poissant:** Yes, I'm wondering out loud.

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

**Mr. Ménard:** Just to help you in your reply. If it is good for Québec within Canada in the context of free-trade, in the context of Québec as opposed to the regions, the same logic would apply. If this is so, I don't see the...

**Mr. Poissant:** Here, of course, the question is whether the regions would be the equivalent of American states or the Canadian provinces. This is quite an important issue, but it's a question that will have to wait. For now, please reply to my second question.

**Mr. Ménard:** For us, the logic is the same. When we say "not at any price", what we mean is, the regions must have the powers and tools they need. This is the condition. Earlier, when I used the metaphor of the pilgrimage, because this is in fact what it is, if regional development powers are returned to Québec and they remain in the hands of the Québec government, we will

not have won much. We may have won a... We may have avoided duplication, we may have avoided... We may not have to deal with major coordination problems, but when it comes to living with the decisions, on an everyday basis, in each of the regions, we will have to establish a special link with those in power in matters of regional development. And, in regional development, this is a power we'll have to share.

**Mr. Poissant:** Mr. Chairman, if there is still time at the end, I would like to ask another question. Your brief, of course, describes some problems that we are very much aware of, such as duplication, responsibility - I myself sometimes run into these problems in business.

Our task will be to study these problems, to make recommendations to the government, to come up with the most practical way of eliminating overlapping or duplication of services. I for one would like to know, assuming we disagree... In fact we can agree that we disagreed in earlier negotiations... Let's look at it from a totally opposite point of view. We separate and now I apparently... Let's say it's done, no two ways about it. In my mind, it's not so cut-and-dried, and since I was unable to agree with my associates yesterday, after separating, will I be able to negotiate more easily with them for other facilities we would like to keep, other procedures we would like to continue using with them? So, I was wondering if you had an opinion on that. Given that we disagreed in the first round, is it possible that later, once all our powers are returned unilaterally - if I can use the term - I could say to my partner: It's not working any more, I'm getting out, but there is a small question of sharing the property, assets, liabilities, etc. How do you think this could be achieved?

**Mr. Ménard:** This is the question that you will be asking yourselves collectively in a little while. Ha, ha, ha! I think that what matters at first is to take a firm stand. In negotiations, you have to know what you want. I think this is the basis for any negotiation, knowing what you want, knowing the minimum you can go after. Well... what we're saying is: For Québec, the minimum, in regional development, is a return of its powers in that area. So, we put this in the negotiation package and as far as that part is concerned, Québec should be firm in its will to recover its powers in matters of regional development. I think that any negotiation must begin by establishing clearly the objectives to be attained. As far as other objectives are concerned, we do not feel we are in a position to comment. We would not presume to comment on all of them, but as far as regional development is concerned, this is an area we know quite well, an area we work with day after

day. This is an area we are particularly concerned with, and in this area, we say: Be firm, stand up for yourself, go for exclusive powers in matters of regional development. This is how I enter negotiations. I make up my mind about what I want before I go after it.

**Mr. Poissant:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Gérald Larose?

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question that Mr. Poissant asked himself is a very interesting one, to which we will certainly return. But first I'd like to point out that, in everything that pertains to subsidies, nothing was settled with the free-trade agreement. This is the subject of current negotiations and it will take five years, with a possible extension of two more, which means seven years. The other thing I'd like to point out is that it was not Québec which negotiated, it was Canada. And to my knowledge, even the ministers responsible for the provinces were not all at the bargaining table. So if we want to control our players, we might well have to make some changes to the arena in which negotiations will take place.

Before going straight to the subject of your brief, I'd like to point out to the members of the Commission who are wondering about the ability of the people appearing before us to answer such questions as what is the constitutional project, what is the political project... it could well be that a number of people find it difficult to give a definitive answer but, just for the fun of it, I made a list of all the proposals of the groups with regard to repatriation of powers to Québec, and a list for André Ouellet. There's still a lot of room on André's list, but for Québec we've already covered a lot of ground. We're off to a good start and if there are some who are unable to answer because of institutional constraints, I have a feeling that after a few days the ultimate answer will be found in the sum total of our answers.

You have touched upon something which we merely skimmed over yesterday, in light of the FACEF memorandum, concerning the quality of government-citizen, and, in this case, government-region relations. You have put forward the objectives that many groups are probably going to adopt as their own, including democratization, decentralization, and even de-concentration, together with a restructuring of power, in the broadest sense, in terms of regional authorities. I would like to hear more, particularly on the electoral process. If there is one issue many people will want to settle, it is that of our political authorities being more representative, of the regions, certainly, but also, in all likelihood, of the interests of the

community, and the current electoral process is perhaps less than perfect in that respect. Is this a question to which you have given much attention?

**Mr. Ménard:** We gave the question indirect attention, Mr. Larose, when we reflected on the overall question of preparing a way to set up regional representation. But, at the outset, there are two things for us: There is the question of the electoral process, but there is also the question of the status of the elected representative. An MP is a legislator, but he is also a potential decision-maker, i.e. an aspirant to the position of minister, i.e. an MP has to toe the party line... so where, ultimately, is his local representation? And if we always have this type of minister, who is a product of the political process, I think we will continue to remain in this same kind of impasse since we will always be dealing with members who, legitimately, aspire to become ministers and who will always be very loyal to the party line, precisely because they aspire to a position like that. And when a local problem occurs, at home, in their region, with regard to a more specific issue in terms of... which might affect their region, how can they reconcile the two roles?

I recall an incident in the Outaouais region, where two cabinet ministers from the Québec Outaouais voted unanimously to establish the space agency in Montréal, when the Outaouais wanted it for itself. This is a case where all you can say is: It was a question of ministerial solidarity. It was a government decision. Ministerial solidarity is something I accept. I accept the idea of solidarity on the part of a minister and his government, but in this case, there was clearly a conflict of roles. He had his executive role with the government, but his role as a representative of the people, what happened to it, what happened to that role? His role as minister took precedence over his role as deputy.

(11:45 a.m.)

We have to try and see how things can be worked out. The American secretaries of State, of Finance and so on were not elected. There are some people who are designated, and who administer vast government departments. Those elected to Congress, to the Senate, to the Chamber of Representatives, have a legislative role, they truly have the role of representing their district, their region, or their state. We believe that one of the first things to look into is duality of roles, which can often be conflictual.

In addition, there is the entire question of regional proportional representation that must be considered. But, we too want to go further in this study, Mr. Larose, and we are willing to present our members with the hypothesis of organizing one of the forums the Commission

would like to see. We are ready to visit each of the regions of Québec, we are ready to undertake a collective study with the regions of Québec on this issue of regional powers and regional representation, and see how the electoral process fits into it. I think such a forum could be a valuable complement to the work of the Commission.

**Mr. Larose:** You are aware that, on a question such as this in which, in fact, you propose an alternative to the British parliamentary model that we have long known, we will have to discuss it within the framework of preparing a Québec constitution after having made a collective choice. But, for you, is regional development, I was going to say as part of a sovereignty project, a condition... I would say, is the sovereignty framework or repatriation of all powers, a better condition when it comes to attaining objectives or are you indifferent to this issue?

**Mr. Ménard:** We put it clearly both in the brief and in the presentation I made this morning. In our view, exclusive and total repatriation of powers in matters of regional development is a prerequisite to a proper regional development within Québec.

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Let us now go on to Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier. No. Mr. Beaumier passes. Mr. Marcel Beaudry.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Ménard, in your brief, on page 6, you state that in a survey, 80 % of respondents approved the current formula of conferences and wish to keep it; however, it would seem that the same survey shows that 70 % of respondents find the impact of summits rather weak, on the one hand, and that 70 % are not satisfied with government commitments. So, you must admit that, looking at these statistics, what has been granted to the regions since the formation of these organizations is perhaps more encouraging than nothing, but the results are still far from eloquent.

This is why, a little further on in your brief, you say, as you told us earlier in your presentation: "Defining the political and constitutional future of Québec" - I am on page 12 - "should not end up, for regional Québec, in a reduction in the number of tools, or in a larger concentration of tools in someone else's hands". You then went on to describe various methods.

In the regional government you propose, or regional representation... But first let's talk about the regional government. Through what method of financing do you suppose such a

regional government would subsist? What would its powers be? Would it have direct taxation powers or would it share the municipalities' or provincial government's tax base and, in the context of regional representation, would it be true to the spirit to say: This regional representation should be allocated a portion of the provincial tax base so that elected members of a region can decide themselves rather than — as you mentioned earlier — let various ministers decide which projects should be dealt with in the region immediately?

**Mr. Ménard:** To answer the first part of your question, Maître Beaudry, when we speak of a regional government, to be frank, I would not want to get tangled up in an overly strict definition, because we were dealing much more with a concept than a principle. But it is clear to us that, when we speak of a regional government, we are speaking of a government that has taxation powers, a government elected by universal suffrage, therefore, a government whose representation is linked with taxation.

How extensive should its taxation powers be? Does it necessarily entail an independent taxation field or is this a taxation field that can be repatriated? For example, could license plate stickers belong to the regions? Or the driver's license fees? Or could it be a tax on a litre of gasoline? Or another percentage of the income tax on individual earnings? I think that, in terms of taxation per se, we are not advocating that any particular mechanism be chosen over another.

The important point for us is that a region should have independent financing powers, so as to strike a better negotiating and partnership balance with the higher levels of government. If a region is continually reduced to begging, if it does not have its own levers and cannot really negotiate with government at higher levels, it will always remain in this kind of state of dependency and we will continue to see statistics such as we looked at earlier, showing that people are not entirely satisfied with economic summits. Why are people not satisfied? Because, among other things, the negotiating powers of developers or regions are very, very limited. People cannot say to the government: We'll go in 50-50 on a project, or, we're willing to put in a little more if you're willing to put in a little bit. We are very, very limited that way.

On the subject of regional representation, I say: Yes, why not? This is one of the hypotheses. It could be boards, or it could be something else, but if we come up with a regional representation hypothesis, why couldn't this regional body administer a regional package? I see no contradiction in that; the accountability is there, these are elected people. They could, in consultation with their community, establish priorities and would be accountable, after that,

to the people for the decisions they made. I find this easily conceivable.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Very well.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Is that it, Mr. Beaudry? Then, Mr. Lucien Bouchard now has the floor.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Anyone who comes from the regions can understand the type of frustration caused by the current situation. It is a well-known fact that this situation is even worse than you have painted it. The type of competition that exists between the two levels of government is reflected in the behaviour of politicians. Politicians, for example, even people who are in the same political clan, the guys who represent the two levels of government in the same county are adversaries in a way: Who has the higher visibility, who will present the cheque, who will turn the sod, who will cut the ribbon? This is part of the natural scheme of things. These things play a very, very important role.

And it is also a fact that, in the regions, people are torn between individual political ambitions, even within the same government. You have counties where the deputy is in the ruling party, the neighbouring county whose deputy is in the opposition party. This also plays an important role in allocations. That's the way things are! Whether you're in politics or not, these things are evident. Then there are the counties whose MNA is a minister and counties whose MNA is not yet a minister and may never be. This also plays a role. So, the fact that there is a desire to establish a rational method of decisions is perfectly legitimate and the fact that this power must be recovered from Ottawa is, to me, also perfectly normal and beyond question. You were the first to say it. The regions should acquire decisional powers. There have to be decisional structures.

You proposed two things: First, regional representation; second, a type of regional decision-making body. On the subject of representation, question one: Would you like to see this kind of hybrid race of representatives who could never become ministers and whose function would bar them from becoming ministers? This would certainly make for some unhappy MNAs! You know that an MNA's driving ambition is to become minister one day. You do know that this is one of his dearest wishes. Not a night goes by that he doesn't dream about it! What I would like to know is, how would this work, having MNAs who can never become ministers?

**A voice:** Let's not generalize!

**A voice:** And second?

**Mr. Bouchard:** Second, the decisional body. I am part of such a body. And I believe that a decisional body is necessary. I know that many people in politics feel that this is the solution and some have even tried to do it. I think that Mr. Lévesque wanted to do this, but he never succeeded. Because, first of all, the technocracy is usually against it, that's normal, and also because it has valid, rational arguments to present. It raises the question of coordination, the coordination of economic decisions. So, in your mind, the moment a regional decisional level is established, how do you make sure the decisions made at that level are not made in a vacuum, but that they are part of the general framework of a rational and coherent economic life for all of Québec?

**Mr. Ménard:** Well, to go back to your concerns about the future of MNAs, or their concerns for their future, I have met with several American senators. These people are not unhappy at all. They are not frustrated at the thought of not becoming U.S. Transport Secretary or U.S. Trade Secretary. These people are interested in a career as senators. Their career is in legislation. I think what we have to change is the rules of the game. If we can do this, before anything else, perhaps the role of MNA will be better valued. Maybe he will not simply be at the mercy of his whip, who says: Come and sit down, don't sit down; you need to be paired, forget about being paired; raise your hand, keep your hand down. In a regional framework, he may be much more proactive in his region's development. So, I think we will eventually have a new breed of deputies. Of course, if the current rule of the game is to say: I am a deputy but my ambition is to become a minister, certain types of people will go along with it. If we say: I am a deputy, I am a regional representative and I will make a career out of being a regional representative, we'll have another kind of people going along with it.

Regarding the question of coordination and all that, obviously there will always be a need for national policies. We obviously did not presume to decentralize major social programs. We would not in the least presume to say that the concepts of guaranteed minimum wages or guaranteed minimum income should be fragmented. But there may be regional applications.

(Noon)

You have talked at length about the issue of education earlier and we know that if there is an area which is currently standardized in Québec, it's education. Ask the mayor of Montréal whether standardized policies have helped integration of the Montréal cultural communities. Go see how this integration of cultural communities works, when 50 % of students in a classroom are allophones and the teacher-student ratio cannot be lowered. Yes, we

do need a national education policy. But, we must also be capable of adapting it and coming up with specific regional applications. This is what we mean when we say that the possibility of a regional authority... but let's not qualify it for the time being, let's keep clear of obstacles. But we shouldn't be forced into straight jackets that prevent us from doing it. That's what we meant to say. For us, it is obvious that there have to be major national policies, but it is also obvious that these policies need to be applied on a region-specific basis.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I think we have a minute left and I would like to give the floor to Mr. Roger Nicolet, who is next on the list.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know whether I can keep to the minute you have granted me, but perhaps the Chair could make a donation of time.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** A modest one.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Mr. Ménard, I would have liked to exchange views with you, perhaps more directly than in these proceedings, which are at times burdened by involved questions, with preambles that lead to equally involved replies.

Basically, the differences of opinion we may have had and which we will certainly have in the future stem from a definition of region and what constitutes the driving force, the very heart of territory organization. But apart from that - and I believe on that, as a matter of fact - we have and we share - and I find it tremendously encouraging - a vision which is similar when it comes to the need to do something for the regions of Québec, whether it is your definition of regions or ours, because, ultimately, the reality is the same.

If we take this as a given, in terms of your idea of a regional government, I would have liked more details. When you speak of a regional deputy, is this the same deputy which would eventually sit at the National Assembly for other purposes or with other responsibilities?

**Mr. Ménard:** I would simply like to avoid confusion. The issue of regional representation is not related to the issue of a regional government, it is a form of accession of a region to regional power. What we are saying is: The region must have some power. Does this power take the form of a regional government? Does it take the form of regional representation? Or does it take the form of a regional board? These are the means of attaining regional power. When we talk of regional representation, for us, this is a regional representation which effectively sits at the National Assembly. And this is one of the

ways to achieve regional power, but is has nothing to do with the other concept, namely that of a regional government.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I am sorry, Mr. Nicolet, we have exhausted the question period for the members and we must go back to the party representatives. Perhaps one of them will ask the question you had in mind. Let's begin with Mr. Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** Mr. Chairman, my colleagues will also have questions, so I will not use up the entire period, but simply for the benefit of those who, I think, are listening – there may be some people watching television – we must be aware of what is meant by repatriating powers in regional development.

You know, we use this short expression and fail to realize all the meaning it carries. Just look at the Canada-Québec agreements on regional development. They deal with just about everything: professional training, cultural affairs, technological development, business development, resources development, road network development, research and development, tourism, etc. In short, regional development comprises nearly all aspects of social life and, consequently, when we talk of repatriating powers in regional development, we must understand that the list is long and here I am echoing what Mr. Larose said. When you add it up – and this is only the second day – by the end of December, when we add all the powers that have been claimed and the powers that we want to repatriate, and put an equal sign next to them, I think we will find that the term sovereignty is inappropriate. It will be insufficient. Here, I do not mean to be ironical. Perhaps we will have to go back to the term I didn't want to use anymore yesterday, independence pure and simple, because that's what it will amount to. But, ultimately, I understand that organizations like yours or like the ACEF yesterday, do not want to comment on the means or meaning of these claims. Nonetheless, the members of the Commission will have to. When everything is added up, the conclusion can only be that, what is meant is sovereignty.

This said, there is a question I would like to ask because I was a little surprised by your answer. You outline three scenarios. First, the current scenario where two governments cancel each other out in regional development matters; second, the other scenario, repatriation of powers to Québec and; third, repatriation of powers to Québec, along with decentralization to the regional level. If I understood correctly, in these three scenarios, if the third – repatriation of powers, along with decentralization – was not selected, you would prefer the status quo, which is to say two governments. Did I understand correctly?

**Mr. Ménard:** Let's say you understood correctly what was said in jest and the frustration we feel; if we're going to live in a centralizing state, let's keep living in this federal context and play one government against the other. It may seem terrible to say, but, what we are saying is, if it comes to that, we would have more to gain this way than to go on living in a totally centralized state, where the regions have no place when it comes to decisional powers and, in that sense, indeed, you understood what I said, except that, if you look at the message in our brief, what we would like to see is, in fact, a repatriation to Québec, but a repatriation to Québec in which the regions have their place in the decisional process. The phrase was said much more to show the difficulty we anticipate than to illustrate what we would like to have.

**Mr. Brassard:** I understand that it was said because of frustration, to use your expression, which is also something I understand. I understand how you feel because I come from a so-called resource region, like my colleague Lucien Bouchard, who asked you questions earlier. My colleague Jeanne Blackburn also comes from a resource region and I know the frustration that can build up because of the situation in regional development. But, in spite of this frustration, we must remain aware of the fact that if things stay as they are at present, we must remain aware of what the involvement of two governments in regional development represents in terms of waste, waste of resources and energy; what it represents in terms of inertia, and the ping-pong game being played by the two governments. As you know, for example, the agreement concluded by Mr. Rémillard in 1988 on regional development is not really in force yet, although it has been more than two years. And the ping-pong game goes on, with mutual accusations of being responsible for the non-application of the agreement, and confusion of objectives. I think we must remain aware of the fact that... I think the ideal solution is repatriation with decentralization and, being from a region, I understand you perfectly. But the fact remains that it would already be some progress to have a single government truly responsible for regional development, to have a single entity to deal with. In any case, this would enable the regions to know who to go to, and to know where to exert pressure, where to take their claims and who to blame if things don't work in regional development, which is not the case at the moment.

**Mr. Ménard:** In theory, you're right, in practice, I'm sorry to say, I remain sceptical, because I am under the impression that you are saying: We'll take care of repatriation, trust us, we'll settle the rest later. What we are saying...

and, once again, pardon our scepticism, what we are saying to you is: No. Repatriation, preparation of a new project for Québec, must be done with the regions in mind and by taking into account a decisional process which must be part of the regions. Unfortunately, I will always have to bring it down to that level, because for us, it is fundamental.

**Mr. Brassard:** Perhaps Mrs. Blackburn would like to take over.

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

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Very briefly, Mr. Chairman, because I have colleagues who would like to have their turn. I found it no surprise but interesting that the conclusion of your brief was very similar to the conclusion of the presentation I made here the day before yesterday. Yes, I do think that a sovereign Québec must make room for the regions. The question has been asked and it must be asked again: What would the place of the regions in a sovereign Québec be? I would presume to say, however, that it is easier to contemplate a distribution of powers when you have them than when you don't. And, at present, we don't have them. So, it would be difficult for the regions to imagine that we will have a centralizing government, to varying degrees. I think that the past of Québec is an indication of its intentions and, in fact, you mention this when you say in your brief, on page 10: "What we have also observed is that, because of this competition, neither of the two levels of government was really willing to give the regions the tools they needed. Of the two, Québec expressed greater intentions. But reality tells another story." This is not surprising, Québec has no powers. I, for one, share your concern and your vision of the place of the regions in a sovereign Québec. The form of government, however, is another thing; I think we should refrain from recreating the Canadian federation; we know what happened there, what is currently happening. I would hesitate.

(12:15 p.m.)

However, when you ask for repatriation of powers - and you have not really answered the question of my colleague Mr. Jacques Brassard - you know what that means. If I add to your demand that of the Fédération des commissions scolaires, which was voiced earlier, these two demands alone represent nearly all powers. And I know that the Fédération, the FTQ, will be here this afternoon. So, we're talking about a wall-to-wall sovereign Québec, aren't we? Wall-to-wall. But I would like to hear what you have to say. Is it true, before I conclude, that your perception of the willingness of the Québec government to decen-

tralize to the regions is really supposed to have gone as far as it could, or perhaps should? Might we conclude, in your estimation, that the Québec of tomorrow needs to be sovereign to assume its development and that, together, we might be able to define the structures? There are quite a number of people from the regions at the table, we should be able to hold our own. And the other question: What would the place of a region like Montréal be? I always defend my region, but at the same time, I am concerned because there are tremendous social inequities in the greater Montréal region.

**Mr. Ménard:** Very well... you are obviously trying to make me say indirectly what I don't want to say directly, but there is one thing...

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Ménard:** ...on which I would like to cast a different light. In its current powers, Québec has shown little intention of decentralizing...

**Mrs. Blackburn:** The OPDQ, the CRCD...

**A voice:** I disagree.

**Mr. Ménard:** ...there was more dialogue on decentralization; this is what we are saying...

**Mrs. Blackburn:** ...administrative conferences...

**Mr. Ménard:** ...but nothing came of it, even with the powers available to Québec. It is true that...

**Mrs. Blackburn:** ...the MRC...

**Mr. Ménard:** ...we may be asking that powers in matters of regional development be returned to Québec, and that covers a lot. Your words may seem reassuring. It may seem reassuring to discuss it, but if the past is any indication of the future, we cannot be confident at this point about the decentralization we'll see in Québec. We must be much more affirmative, we must be much more concrete in the ways we decentralize than we are now. Name me the sectors in Québec that are really decentralized right now. If we're going to have more, we'll have to become much more decentralized.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Chevette?

**Mr. Chevette:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand from what you've said that you're for complete repatriation of powers, except that you link repatriation with... You posit eventual decentralization as a condition. I find your



viewpoint too intransigent. It's not a 100-year old tradition but after all, standing economic summits have been around for 10 or 15 years. There have, of course, been regional economic summits, and a structure has been put in place, but the problem is not necessarily with governments, it's due to the lack of agreement among decision-makers at the regional level, and the municipal level that wanted to have a say, and decision-makers on economic questions representing various economic organizations. There has never been a clear wish. It's just barely starting to emerge. You want powers on the regional level. I can fully agree with you about summits that determine global priorities, so you end up with just a few handouts, just enough so that you don't look ridiculous, but not enough for projects to be achieved. I've attended these meetings, I've seen it. The day when you have the funds, when you can allocate them regionally as you see fit, you'll have the decision-making power you're seeking, unless I haven't attended the same meetings as you. So, my question is as follows: Don't you think that the day when we have one single level of government, thus no more arguments, no more bickering, no more competition, the day when there is one level, and the regional level knows exactly where it's going in terms of the decision-making power it's seeking, don't you think that you'll have a better chance of achieving exactly what you're asking for?

**Mr. Ménard:** Mr. Chairman, may I ask Mr. Redmond, who comes from the same region as Mr. Chevette...

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

**Mr. Ménard:** ...to answer as one regional representative to another, being from the same region.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Of course, but he must be brief as we're running out of time for this group.

**Mr. Redmond (John):** Mr. Chairman, to answer Mr. Chevette, I think he is confusing two things. What is not clear at present on the Québec level is whether the regions have power and whether they can exercise it. When this is not clear on the Québec playing board, the players are constantly at odds. As soon as you clearly establish that there is regional power, that there is a regional authority, of course there will still be bickering, but at least we'll know one thing: the channel it goes through. It's not clear at present and that's why throughout Québec, there's fighting within the regions. So, if you think "one-stop" shopping so to speak would be a better idea, well, we're not so sure.

And we think it must all fit together. It doesn't seem contradictory to say that we'll respect the needs and wishes of the regions, within a new institution.

**Mr. Chevette:** Is that it?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you. We are now going to go on to another group of questions. Mrs. Hovington.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, congratulations on your brief. As a woman from the regions, I'd like to thank you for having come here today to represent the regions of Québec. I'm a native of the North Shore, a so-called outlying region. I currently represent the riding of Matane, which is in Gaspésie-Bas-Saint-Laurent, half in the Gaspé Peninsula, half in the Lower St. Lawrence. I'm aware of the needs of the regions and when you say that regional development is difficult, it's true, it is difficult. And you have to come from a region like the North Shore, Lower St. Lawrence or Gaspé Peninsula to appreciate the difficulties involved in attracting projects and investors for development. In fact, I could even compare this, if you'll allow me, with the situation of a woman in society. A woman will always have to fight three or four times as hard as a man to reach a level where she can enjoy some equality, no matter what the field. For the regions, it's somewhat similar. They always have to fight two, three or four times harder than other places to get things and to attract development.

You speak of difficulties between the federal and provincial governments. You speak of division among the regions, and it's true. A new region was declared in the Gaspé Peninsula on the provincial level which does not even correspond to the federal. You can see the difficulty this creates for unemployment insurance and unemployment insurance reform. The statistics for the Gaspé are not taken only from its own provincial administrative region, they're taken from both the Lower St. Lawrence and Gaspé to establish the number of weeks for unemployment at 10, 11 or 14. Gaspé is at a disadvantage because its rate of unemployment is much higher, and the Lower St. Lawrence gains from this because its unemployment rate is lower. Thus, because of the division of regions, Gaspé is at a disadvantage.

You speak of overlapping programs. This is true. I was at the "Agir et réagir" conference you mentioned organized by the MPs in Rimouski. I spent the day there with other MNAs. What came out of that conference, what the minister responsible for the region requested was that yet another committee be set up to study and determine the main development priorities. But that had already been done at the provincial level. We did it when we established

the economic summits. So why create a second committee to study development priorities in Lower St. Lawrence and Gaspé? That's an example of duplication and it's not efficient.

I also think you are harsh on the summits. Economic summits have been in place since 1980. On page 6, you say for example that, in 1983, it was the choice of the regions, but by the preceding government. In 1988, a document that was filed entitled "A Time of Regional Enterprise" confirmed this. But we went further than just confirming the choice of regions made in 1983, because we actually institutionalized the summit. We have a summit on economic development every four years and a biennial that follows up on the summits.

There are, of course, things to be reviewed, things to be improved, but I would really like you, as spokesman of an organization, to give Québec or the government your suggestions as to how we can improve these summits and conferences, considering that 80 % of respondents feel the current formula for conferences should be maintained, provided it is improved. I'd like to hear your suggestions on the improvements that must be made.

I would also like to discuss, if you'll allow me, the question of concerted action. Mr. Chevrete mentioned that there are mentalities to be changed, because there is bickering in the regions. And there are mentalities, of course, to be changed within certain departments that refuse to adapt certain programs, because adapting programs, I think, is important. The same program does not necessarily suit everyone in Québec. A program that suits Montréal does not necessarily suit Gaspé. Adapting is an important aspect. I'd really like... This is what I mean when I say that there are mentalities to be changed within certain departments, so that programs can be adapted to the reality of the regions. But there are mentalities to be changed at the regional level as well. Concerted action and regional solidarity are not yet developed enough in reality, in my opinion.

I'd also like to mention - I'll do so quickly because I know some of my colleagues would like to ask questions - on page 8 of your brief, you say several studies, including opinions of the Economic Council of Canada, have revealed that corporate grants constitute unexpected "profits" for the companies involved and count for little in their choice of location. I would be interested in hearing what Mr. Poissant has to say about this. Personally, I do not completely agree with what you say in your brief because if it had not been for provincial and federal incentives, tax incentives and loan guarantees, I don't know whether Donohue Matane would have come to Matane and invested in a paper mill that the community had been waiting for for 30 years. I think that it took political will, grants and loan guarantees for Donohue to come and invest in

Matane.

When you speak of a strong central government, when you speak of repatriating federal powers, I'd like you to explain in a greater detail how, for example, repatriation of federal powers - the powers that affect primarily regional development in Québec - could make for a more effective policy on the regions and regional development. What powers would actually be granted to the regions? Assuming we had a sovereign Québec, wouldn't you be creating another federation with a sovereign Québec that would hold all powers of regional development and give certain powers to certain regions? Or, if we did not move towards a confederation, perhaps we would have a sovereign Québec with sovereign regions under a strong central government? I don't know. I'd like to hear what you have to say on this.

Mr. Ménard: First, when you say you find us harsh in our judgment of socioeconomic summits, it's our members who have made this judgment. A survey of our members was conducted for us by the University in Rimouski. That's really what our members think. On the other hand, there is something that hasn't been said, that's important to mention: When you speak of concerted action or cooperation, it's probably one of the best spin-offs of a socioeconomic summit. The exercise in cooperation that goes on in a summit, with the problems and difficulties - you don't necessarily come out unscathed - is just as important as monetary government commitments, because they contribute to building cooperation within a region.

You want us to tell you what we want from a summit...

Mrs. Hovington: To improve it...  
(12:30 p.m.)

Mr. Ménard: We'll tell you. We'll tell you on November 22, 23 and 24. We're holding a special conference on the issue entitled "Vers de nouveaux sommets". We want to establish, with our entire membership, new elements which should improve the formula. You ask whether we want to build a new federation, a new confederation. Well, what powers do you want? I'd like to look at the French model - and I know there's always a danger of falling into the trap of models. I don't think there is anyone who could think that France is not a unitary nation. It is a unitary nation. No one sees it as a federation or a confederation, but it has set up regions and institutionalized them. It has created regional councils. It has created a new category of representatives who are elected by universal suffrage. And this comes back to Mr. Nicolet's question earlier: as long as there are responsibilities and levels to assume them... There isn't only one level. There's the local level. There's the MRC level. But there are

things that must be assumed at a regional level. There are things that must be assumed at a higher level. That does not necessarily mean we're rebuilding a confederation or a federation. It's just that we confer on the most suitable authority - the authority that can provide the best service at the lowest cost - the power to provide this service or the power to decide the fate of a given service or program. It's in this sense that we speak of regional power. It's not in the sense of creating small provinces within Québec or constantly being subject to the constitutional process within the new structure; it's really in the sense that there are elements that can co-exist at each level without there being competition between those levels, but rather complementarity.

**Mrs. Hovington:** You know that there are two levels of government really recognized, at present, in the Canadian Constitution: the federal and the provincial. The municipal level is not recognized in the current Constitution. If you'll excuse the expression, it's a creature of the provincial government. Thus, if we obtain a sovereign Québec with repatriation of powers, how do you see... Is it still fair from an administrative point of view for powers to be delegated to the regions through the municipalities? How do you see it? I'd like you to be...

**Mr. Ménard:** It would certainly be through legislation; that is, the municipality would be recognized constitutionally. That, I think is fundamental and must be defended, and in many constitutions, it is. Constitutional and institutional recognition of the municipality is important. But the laws that created regionalization in France, for example - I'm sorry, but it's the model I know the best and have studied the most - have not led to constitutional amendments. Those laws were made within a legislative framework, but the framework was a constitution that already recognized local communities; only the rest was done by legislation. And just because it was not entirely accomplished through legislation doesn't mean these governments are not legitimate. The regional councils, and the general councils that represent the departments - but particularly the regional councils because they were formed the most recently - are universally elected, have the power of taxation, and have authority that is well defined in French law.

**Mrs. Hovington:** I'd like to come back - I still have a little time and won't take long - to the role of elected representatives. By the way, I think you were really hard on us. Personally, I find it very worthwhile for an MNA like myself to represent a rural riding in the Gaspé Peninsula. The role of an MNA is to represent

his or her region in the government. And I think that elected representatives have the power within their caucus to make representations to the lucky (perhaps) ones in the Cabinet. But I think that elected representatives have ample ability and means to make themselves heard and to defend the ridings they were elected to defend. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Madam. We have one minute left. Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Time has almost run out, but my colleague has gone over the question very well. Mr. Chairman, I'd simply like to thank Mr. Ménard, Mr. Janvier and Mrs. Saint-Georges, as well as Mr. Redmond and Mr. Thériault for having agreed to appear before us and for presenting such an interesting brief. Indeed, there can be no economic development in Québec if there is no regional development.

Québec is a vast, sparsely-populated region and if economic development does not go through the regions in a decentralized manner - and I make the distinction between decentralization and deconcentration... I agree with you that on some levels, summits may be more akin to deconcentration than to decentralization. I agree with you on that, although much improvement needs to be made.

We have made a lot of progress in the past few years, but I must say that, when you speak of repatriation of full authority for Québec in matters of regional economic development, you're touching on an extremely delicate point. If there's one subject, one field where there has been duplication, and an incredible waste of energy, time and money, it's regional economic development. This is because both levels of government are involved and, in spite of all the attempts at joint action, it's obvious that it's extremely difficult.

You're perfectly right, Mr. Ménard, we cannot continue like this. But to say that we need to create a regional government! I'd like to refer back to what Mr. Campeau said when he mentioned the power of taxation and cited four or five levels of government that can tax the individual. Couldn't the municipalities - or the municipal organization, I should say, that is presently in place - play an important role in this decentralization? I refer, for example, to the French model that you yourself cited where the municipalities play an extremely important role; I also refer to what my colleague, the MNA for Matane, put so well, namely the role of the elected representative includes the provincial as well as the municipal level; I refer also to what the people from the school boards said. Mr. d'Anjou spoke of the possibility of the school boards, for example, having the jurisdiction to train manpower; that too is a means of

decentralizing. If we use the means already at our disposal on the level of governments that are already in place and decentralized - municipal, school boards and other - don't you think that we can accomplish a great deal?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Rémillard. Thank you, ladies, gentlemen and representatives of the Association who presented an extremely interesting brief. As you can see, it has raised a number of questions and left the members of the Commission with a good deal of food for thought.

I'd like to remind you all that we will resume at 3:30 p.m. with the FTQ's brief.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:40 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:32 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Please take your seats, we're going to resume our work and for once, at the indicated time. I'd like to thank all of those appearing before us for being ready at the designated time to present the brief of the *Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec*. The group presenting the brief will be led by Mr. Daoust, however Mr. Laberge, of course, as Commission member, will have the right to intervene as part of his regular right to speak. Mr. Daoust, would you please introduce the briefing table.

#### **Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec**

**Mr. Daoust (Fernand):** With pleasure, Mr. Chairman. On my left, Mr. Jean Lavallée, who is director-general of the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, as well as president of the FTQ-Construction; Claude Ducharme, Québec Director of the Canadian Automobile Workers; Clément Godbout, Québec Director of the United Steel Workers of America; René Roy, Québec Vice-president of the Communications and Electrical Workers of Canada; and Lauraine Vaillancourt, officer in charge of the status of women at the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union. All those present are also FTQ vice-presidents.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I would remind you that you have 10 minutes to present the brief which was already given to all the members of the commission, who have read it as well as its summary and analysis, but you have 10 minutes to present it. This sitting will last for an hour and a half, so the question period afterwards will be divided as follows: 15 minutes for the parliamentary group from the Government, 15 minutes for the parliamentary group from the Official Opposition, 40 minutes

for members who put their names down beforehand, and 10 minutes for the chairmen. If you would care to begin your presentation, Mr. Daoust.

**Mr. Daoust:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. There comes a time in the lifetime of a population when, to avoid missing an important change in direction, a decision must be made to alter the course of collective history. It is with a feeling of urgency and a heightened awareness of the crucial nature of the period Québec is currently experiencing that the FTQ appears before this Commission to proclaim its conviction and share it with the greatest number of people. Québec must decide to attain full and complete sovereignty. The saga of the constitutional talks, negotiations held behind closed doors or in public, sudden changes of mood and ultimatums should have been enough to convince us that as long as Québec does not have the courage to assert its independence, it will receive nothing but indifference and contempt. The last 30 years in Canada have been punctuated by commissions and reports without result, each of which has only served to emphasize how staying in Canada is an inescapable dead-end for Québec.

The FTQ's decision in favour of sovereignty was consolidated in the sixties, the era when national awareness clashed with social awareness. During the seventies, our conception of Québec was affirmed as a result of experience gained working on certain questions such as the labour force and the language of work, and we began to draw up a long list of sectors where the federal presence was pointless, disruptive or downright harmful to Québec's interests.

The FTQ still sees a number of practical reasons for choosing sovereignty. We want sovereignty for full employment, of course, for economic policies adapted to our industrial structure and not to that of Ontario, obviously. But also, but above all, we want sovereignty because Québec is our only country and Canada will always be the country of other people.

Once again, during the last round of constitutional talks, the provinces with English-speaking majorities let us know that they did not want to acknowledge our distinctness. In addition to these political considerations there is the observation that Québec has changed over the last 25 years. We have developed unique institutions. Several of our firms operate on an international scale. Our government machinery, our public utilities are modern and, when all is said and done, efficient. Public institutions like the Québec Deposit and Investment Fund, cooperatives like the *Mouvement Desjardins*, union institutions like the *Fonds de solidarité des travailleurs du Québec*, initiatives like *Corvée-habitation* are each, in their own way, proof of our distinctness and our socioeconomic maturity.

The positive changes which have occurred in Québec these last few decades have not come from our bond with the federal government. They have come from our own initiatives and institutions. If the constitutional debate to be held in Québec over the next few months is to focus on what is truly at stake, two requirements must be fulfilled. Firstly, constitutional status must not be confused with a blueprint for society. In fact, once Québec has attained sovereignty, it will remain an open political arena which will continue to offer the opportunity to hold the debates which will ultimately shape the new sovereign state.

Secondly, the greatest care must be taken to avoid reducing the discussion to mere economics. We refuse to enter into the war of numbers already started by some people. A population cannot select its constitutional status the way one selects a retirement plan on the basis of financial statements. The FTQ came to the conclusion that the federal system is costly, inefficient and a source of confusion and inconsistency primarily by evaluating policies in three major fields, namely, the economy and employment, the population, and language. The social priority in the FTQ is to set up a policy of full employment. This is the central theme of our blueprint for society.

Over the years, we have come to see full employment as something related to the community which is rooted in joint action on several levels. Our vision implies renewed social relations and an enriched government role. But for social cooperation to actually work, it needs a lively community, a community which shares a culture, objectives, a history, a solidarity. Québec society is ready to meet this challenge. A concerted policy of full employment can only be introduced in a real country and it also implies, of course, national policies and planning that acknowledge the characteristics of each region.

At present, two levels of government are fighting over what should be done, resulting in inefficiency and election-like tactics by rival parties. To carry out a consistent policy while making employment a priority, Québec must determine all the levers; however, at this point in time, just a few months of a Canadian monetary policy unadapted to the needs of the Québec economy is enough to eliminate thousands of jobs, send dozens of businesses into bankruptcy, and inhibit other firms from even starting up. Only by taking control of the macroeconomic machinery will we be able to adopt flexible policies adapted to the needs of our economy and our agricultural sector, both of which differ from those of the other provinces.

The population policy is tied to the policy of full employment through its section of measures concerning immigration. The population policy is also linked to the protection of our

cultural and linguistic distinctness. In this vital field where the Québec government is the only guarantor, the federal government currently holds enough power to seriously inhibit Québec's action. The Cullen-Couture agreement which seemed satisfactory in 1978 no longer is. In any event, Ottawa is balking at renegotiating this agreement, a timely reminder that we have no powers in this field and that the agreement was only a temporary concession. In truth, even if a very generous agreement which considered Québec's demands were negotiated, the lack of autonomy, the lack of sovereignty will always be a handicap when integrating immigrant populations. As long as Québec lives under the federal system, it cannot be perceived by immigrants as a French-speaking land of welcome and the linguistic choices of new arrivals will always be a source of concern for a large segment of the Québec population. It is one thing to form a nation, but this nation must be able to express its energy and creativity. This nation must also know its history and the feeling of belonging to a living culture, and feel this difference. Finally, this nation must identify with a proud, common language. This is why our cultural, linguistic and educational policies are also central to the objective of protecting our distinctness. This is why population is another field in which it is absolutely urgent that we have self-determination. Québec, which is experiencing an exceptional linguistic situation, needs solid language legislation which can send a clear, unambiguous message in favour of French as the common language, the language of work and the language of signs.

The FTQ hopes to see Québec assume the powers of a sovereign nation. The global tendency towards continentalization cannot be used as an argument against Québec sovereignty, for it is a matter of sovereign nations. We mention Europe at this juncture, for it is sometimes held up as an example by those who oppose sovereignty. In 1985, the heads of state and government leaders of the European Council put into motion a vast procedure which, by the end of 1992, will lead to the creation of a single market. This is an important achievement, but it should be noted that it is the fruit of agreements between sovereign countries, countries whose sovereignty has remained completely intact. What these countries have done is given themselves methods for managing their interdependence. They are not yet at the stage of confederation, and are even further from federation. I would like to take advantage of this discussion to bring up the question of international relations. It goes without saying that the first step of a sovereign Québec would be to seek membership in the UN and other similar organizations. Québec must define itself as an international player and adopt a policy centred on diplomacy, economics and cooperation.

The link between Canada and Québec. It is inevitable, to the FTQ, that ties must exist by means of various agreements, regardless of whatever happens between Canada and a sovereign Québec. However, if these ties are to be entered into freely, it is important that, before any discussion of this matter, Québec announce its desire to proclaim sovereignty. The transfer of federal services to Québec is of interest to the FTQ, for it concerns thousands of our members. We would like to ensure that their jobs and union gains are protected.

The question of aboriginal rights. The Oka crisis was so badly managed politically by both governments that Québec lost most of its credibility in the matter. We have everything to gain by settling the eternal dispute between all the inhabitants of Québec to prevent those outside Québec from using it as demagoguery to destabilize Québec. The FTQ submits that Québec must, as soon as possible, rewrite its action with respect to aboriginal communities, within the framework of the resolution adopted by the National Assembly in 1985.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Daoust, your time is nearly up.

**Mr. Daoust:** I have one minute left. This Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec was created to organize the discussion on, and begin finding a solution to, our recurrent constitutional problem. Its inception was a message to English Canada. We need to clarify things among ourselves and then announce our findings.

Immediately following the last constitutional marathon, there was an illusion of consensus in Québec. In fact, the only new thing added in June was that Québec, as a whole, noted its rejection by English Canada. The search for a consensus must not become an obsession for the Commission. For the FTQ, it is clear that the population of Québec will have to choose between two camps: that which advocates remaining within Canada, with some adjustments, and that which advocates sovereignty. In our opinion, the mandate of the Commission must be to emphasize a minimum consensus, report the major options which surface, and suggest methods for making a constitutional, collective, and democratic choice.  
(3:45 p.m.)

I would like to close by saying that the FTQ hopes that means will be implemented to require the citizens of Québec to determine, in the short term, their constitutional future. This choice, in our opinion, must not be the subject of an election, but a referendum. An election and a referendum have different things at stake and we do have a legislative framework which differentiates the steps to take in either case. For the time being, we recommend holding a

referendum very shortly, once the Commission has tabled its report, in other words, in the spring of 1991.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Daoust. We will now move on to the question period. Mr. Jacques Parizeau now has the floor.

**A voice:** Mrs. Pauline Marois.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Oh! Excuse me. Mrs. Pauline Marois.

**Mrs. Marois:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In any event, we, or some of us, will have a chance to intervene.

First of all, I would like to thank you for the brief you have presented today, which is very interesting and, obviously, you will allow me to say, very pertinent. The members of the Commission have been complaining, for the last few sittings, that people dare not decide, dare not take a stand. However, in your case, I think that it is clear you are taking a stand, and an unambiguous one.

That being said, I have a certain number of questions that I would like to raise with you. In your brief, you come back to what you expect from the Commission and, in particular, you identify the fact that the Commission's role is to clarify concepts, clarify everything which concerns the orientations that could be favoured, but above all, you identify the fact that there is a risk of rekindling the state of fear that prevailed, 10 years ago now, in fact, I can remember, when Quebecers were asked the question about our blueprint for the future.

You say that the role of the Commission, among other things, is to clarify and eliminate somewhat the phenomena that could arise and make people afraid of selecting the sovereignty option. Apart from the efforts of the Commission, are you under the impression that groups such as yours can try to help eliminate somewhat these ghosts which could show up at any time during the discussion, and which we are very aware of?

**Mr. Daoust:** We are not only capable of action, we have taken action. We experienced the dramatic period of the last referendum, in 1980. We learned all the arguments; we heard them all. We remember that at one point, in certain circles, people were saying that voting no meant voting yes, and that people tried, by every means available at the time, in certain circles, once again, to brandish bugaboos to infect the climate in Québec with fear, to scare the workers of Québec. All kinds of exoduses were talked about. Some head offices left the province, you remember, it was all part of these kinds of scare tactics. People talked about job

loss, decreased standard of living, old-age pensions being reduced, if not completely eliminated, and it was at that point that we took action.

At the time of the last referendum, the FTQ, this is reported in our brief, held a special assembly which brought together some 2000 people. During this assembly, participants obviously discussed all the problems of a constantly evolving Québec, a Québec which hoped to be sovereign. This exercise in democracy was accompanied by documents, and was preceded by a huge tour of most of the province. We used any means possible to try to dissipate the fears and I think that, to a certain extent, we were reasonably successful, at least, within our organization.

Furthermore, what we would like to say, at this point, to those who may once again be tempted, and those who may get lost in this type of discussion, which we disapprove of anyway and which should be condemned by all the participants in this Commission, this type of fearmongering, I think it is the democratic duty of all those present, of the entire population, to denounce this fearmongering, because, once again, it is charged with emotionalism in certain circles. One must take into account the weaknesses found among certain people who live in our society. At some point, demagogues could issue calls which could damage democratic discussion. Therefore, as far as we are concerned, we are going to intensely pursue the same type of action among members of the various unions in the FTQ, using all the means at our disposal, in order to ensure that this discussion is not devoted exclusively to economic problems - which are very important - but devoted to all of the problems experienced by a society and the personal aspirations its people must have.

So, once again very quickly, we disapprove of or we denounce any fearmongering and we hope that participants from every group and from every milieu will conduct a fully objective discussion and we believe that it is part of the Commission's role to make sure that debates of this kind are not held.

**Mrs. Marois:** Thank you. You mention... I'm going to ask a short question about this element of fear, then I would like to come back to the other theme that you tackle in your brief, which you are very familiar with and which concerns federal bureaucrats. In fact, the briefs that we have heard until now have not shown this feeling of fear and anxiety; on the contrary, they have judged that, under certain circumstances, a move towards sovereignty could take place without causing any major problems, if that is the selected blueprint for society!

This being said, one of the elements which has come out of these sittings, however, is that

people are saying: There will be - and this is normal during any change, especially important changes like a change in constitutional status - a transition phase which could have a negative effect on investment decisions, a form of instability, etc. With respect to this phenomenon are you prepared, in some way, to cooperate and bring in other partners so that this transition phase is as calm as possible and above all, as short as possible? And, is this somewhat how you envision it? That is my first question. The second concerns federal bureaucrats. You mention in your brief that your Congress represents, I believe, 35 000?

**Mr. Daoust:** Many, many more than that but I will be more precise when I answer your question.

**Mrs. Marois:** Very well. Of course, various studies have been conducted, some of which, as a matter of fact, also tended to invoke the fear that these workers would lose their jobs, etc. However, there have been studies which tend to do the opposite. There was one in particular, by Mr. Saint-Germain from the University of Ottawa, in which Mr. Saint-Germain estimates that Québec is generally capable of taking on the lot of federal employees. First of all, have you read this study? And second of all, if you have not read it, according to your own estimates, does it appear that the duties currently taken on by federal bureaucrats are, in general, duties which would be taken on by the government of a sovereign Québec and that therefore, bureaucrats will obviously be taken care of somewhere in this new orientation?

**Mr. Daoust:** The FTQ represents all the federal bureaucrats who are directly employed by the Canadian government. There are approximately 35 000 in Québec, who are unionized. In addition, the FTQ represents postal workers, and many workers who fall under the federal Labour Code. Among others, I can think of the employees of Bell Canada; employees from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, certain workers in the aviation sector, in transportation. There are perhaps nearly one hundred thousand workers who, directly or indirectly, are currently subject to either the Canada Labour Code or to other federal legislation. As for us, we feel there is nothing ambiguous about the attainment of sovereignty. It must not remove any gains whatsoever from these workers, gains won through negotiating a collective agreement, nor can it or must it serve as a pretext to worsen their working conditions. However, this problem is not terribly difficult to surmount. As you all know, 90 % of all workers in Québec already fall under the jurisdiction of the Government of Québec. And the rest, approximately 10 %, at all levels, be they

unionized or not, fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

For this reason, an amended Québec Labour Code, or any other legislation, regardless of the road we take, must see to it that the certifications which were granted and which govern collective agreements made under the jurisdiction of any federal law whatsoever, automatically become, in comparison with Québec wage earners, granted certifications and collective work agreements governed by these certifications. This is not a difficult technical problem nor is it complicated to solve. There are precedents in this field; the law is very explicit in the field of labour relations. This should not pose any problems, but again, these unionized workers – and this bears repeating – must be able to keep their union organizations, their unions, and, obviously, any signed collective work agreements. They will then become Québec workers who will fall under the jurisdiction of all the labour laws that Québec has developed.

As for your very first question, yes, we do hope that the transition is done quickly, we say it in our brief. The hemming and hawing has gone on long enough. There have been enough commissions and studies. We could practically fill this room with reports from all sorts of commissions and all sorts of studies and with any documents that were written. We have reached a point where a decision must be made. Everyone is saying this, everyone is repeating this, those who preceded us here. And the decision must be made quickly. We cannot allow ourselves to draw out indefinitely the debates which will inevitably become pointless the longer they go on, and must decide to let the people of Québec quickly reach a clear and indisputable decision.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I'm sorry, Mr. Parizeau, but there are only three minutes remaining.

**Mr. Parizeau:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to pursue the matter brought up by Mrs. Marois, concerning federal bureaucrats. I well understand, Mr. Daoust, what you are talking about, that is, in a certain number of cases the transition from one system to another will not be complicated. Each time entire units are transferred, postal workers, for example, there is no reason why the certifications already granted, the collective agreements already signed should not apply; in short, there are no problems in this respect. However, we must ask ourselves what is going to happen when services are merged, people who are going to be... Look, it is completely obvious that in the framework you are discussing, there will not be both Québec delegations and consulates, am I right? There are a number of services which are going to have to merge, some of which currently employ Québec

bureaucrats, and some of which employ bureaucrats who currently work for Ottawa. And, there are several hypotheses for how this could function, but I will admit that I have, until now, only brought up hypotheses. Mergers create a problem, in that neither type of worker must lose anything gained in their old jobs. And this is a desire that I can only express in conclusion, because I have very little time, but I think that the FTQ is the best organization to give a hand to help solve these problems, because you do in fact represent nearly all of these employees. You have a kind of expertise in this which is probably unique. To some extent, you should practically be given the problems so that you can react to them by answering the question: How would you correctly solve this problem? In this sense, I only had one problem with your brief, when you said that you thought there were very simple cases of integration, while there were others which called for a bit more imagination.

(4:00 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** If you will agree with the last proposition, Mr. Daoust, I think that we will have used up all the time available.

**Mr. Daoust:** Very quickly. It is true that the FTQ has incredible expertise in this field, and has long been associated with it. This is nothing new. However, we do hope, and this is fundamental, that nothing is done without consulting, involving the employees themselves, the unions most directly affected, as well as the FTQ, in the decisions and projects which are going to take shape. These people chose unions which suit their group personality. They have a deep-rooted history; they have collective agreements, work relations. These must not be disintegrated or taken apart. Therefore, it is essential that our unions as well as the FTQ be consulted about all the projects and achievements to be done.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will now move on to another question period and give the floor to Mr. Guy Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Thank you very much. Mr. Daoust, FTQ representatives, good afternoon. I must admit – and I said as much, jokingly, to Mr. Laberge earlier – that your report did not surprise me in the least. I believe your position is very well known, publicized, and long-held. There are, however, some elements which appear less defined or clear. For example, on page 8, you talk about the fact that macroeconomic policies are the first element which must be reoriented when a policy of full employment is adopted. You go on to mention certain major tools such as foreign trade, currency, etc. Am I to understand from



this that you are advocating a Québec currency?

**Mr. Daoust:** The FTQ has no set beliefs as far as currency is concerned. We have studied the matter, but I really think that it is important to have explanations from specialists, constitutionalists and people who play with these types of concepts and realities. We have not reached any decisions about currency. Will there be Québec currency, Canadian currency? I know that there are numerous countries, equal in size and economic importance to the Québec we wish to create, which have their own currency. I'm thinking of many European countries. We could name them all, basically. Canadian currency, Québec currency... Although we do not feel that this is a false debate, first and foremost - we repeat this throughout our brief - give us full powers and then, once we have been given the mandate shaped by the will of the people, it will be up to the most competent people in the field to make suggestions. But, once again, as far as we are concerned, this is not a set belief. One or the other, we will decide according to the advice from experts who will explain highly technical matters, such as currency, to us.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** In terms of the sovereignty you are advocating, which ties would you like to maintain with all of Canada, for example?

**Mr. Daoust:** Without a doubt, many ties. We are pushed together by geography, whether we like it or not. There again, long association can and should convince us that ties must be maintained, economic realities, the work world and relations of all kinds. Ties must be maintained. We must not forget that the North American market, the Canadian market for Québec as well as for all of and the rest of Canada, they influence each other. Therefore, there will be economic ties, without a doubt. And, in addition to economic ties and neighbourly terms - because this is only normal - we are in favour of interdependence. Sovereignty does not contradict interdependence, not one bit. Far from it. The globalization of markets, the continentalization of the economy, as we said in our brief, are pushing us inevitably and inexorably to maintain all sorts of ties with the rest of the country. Full powers will be decided through treaties, agreements, through all sorts of adjustments to the type of relations we must continue to maintain with the rest of the country. But this is not a rupture, this is not a severance, there will be ties. Agreed, we are going to cut the umbilical cord, we are going to assert ourselves, we are going to realize our full potential, we are going to be ourselves and we are going to negotiate with Canada but there will be many ties maintained between a sovereign Québec and the rest of the country.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** If I summarize by saying that political sovereignty or complete political independence, accompanied by economic ties negotiable through treaties as you define it, have I given a fair definition of your position?

**Mr. Daoust:** Yes, that is our position. Full powers, sovereignty, a country in every sense of the word which knows, in fact, its major orientations, a country which shapes them itself, which has at its disposal and which must maintain ties with all the countries in the world but of course... We hope, in any event, ties with the rest of the country and ties with the United States.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** I would like to thank you but as our time is limited I will hand the floor over to my colleague.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Dauphin?

**Mr. Dauphin:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, I, too, carefully read the brief submitted by the FTQ. I can tell you that from the very start, you take a stand, contrary to other groups which have preceded you. I would perhaps like to take you into the area of linguistic policy or population policy. At one point, assuming that Québec becomes sovereign, you say that, either now or even later, Bill 101 may not only have to be maintained, but strengthened, and I would like to take you into the area of immigration. Currently, our experience with immigration is that the great majority of immigrants settle in the Montréal metropolitan area. And we are obviously aware of how attractive the English language is in the metropolitan area. Even with a sovereign Québec, would you look favourably on all sorts of incentives to encourage our new immigrants to settle outside of Montréal, somewhat like the group which preceded you, the importance of Québec's other regions, to try different ways of encouraging regionalism with immigration? I would like to hear your thoughts on the subject.

**Mr. Daoust:** You are correct, Mr. Dauphin, in saying that most of the immigrant population settles in Greater Montréal. It is interesting to note that 20 % of Montréal's active population is immigrant. This means that one worker out of five in Greater Montréal is, in other words, a worker from another country. And that convinces us that it is absolutely necessary to free up all policies at our disposal to facilitate the integration of immigrants. We said it in our brief, when you leave your country, whether you like it or not, you are uprooted and integration mechanisms must be put in place to eliminate

social tensions which, when there is no integration policy, continually disrupt the social climate in a city like Montréal and in a province like Québec. What should be noted about French as the language of work, is that when an immigrant, regardless of who he is or where he comes from, decides to come to this part of North America, whether we like it or not, this immigrant comes to settle in Canada. Settling in Canada, from what he knows about it, what he's read, what he's been told, means settling in a country where there are two official languages, one of which is also spoken by a quarter of a billion North Americans, with the well-known influence of the United States. He recognizes the importance of French, as soon as he learns about and starts to live in our milieu.

We cannot blame them, the immigrants who come here, for opting for English once in a while, with the job market attracting them in many cases. We need integration policies that are commensurate with the problem, which enable us to turn these immigrants into French-speaking citizens, in the more or less short term. Integration policy, well, I don't want to go into all the details, support policy, training policy, language teaching policy, in fact, all these policies have essentially the same objective: make it possible for these people to live and work in French in Québec. I'm coming back to what I was saying before, at this time, and this is one of the basics - it is not the only one which encourages us to opt for sovereignty - demography, for the Québec of today, with barely and perhaps soon its seven million citizens, shows us that everything must be done to consolidate, solidify our presence on North American soil and our French-speaking presence. To do this, it is necessary to use any means necessary, and Lord knows that power sharing, duplication of services, intervention by the federal government in all the policies that we are familiar with, are detrimental to Québec's policy of francizing immigrants.

As for decentralization, without a doubt, we can hope for it, and there must be incentives to avoid ghettoizing immigrants in neighbourhoods or regions, but to do this, we must have access to all the levers, all the powers. And there must be no constitutional traps which prevent us, or which create hopes among immigrants, encouraging them, in some cases, to choose a weaker francization than that we would like to see. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Dauphin:** I believe that Mr. Rémillard...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I understand that you would like to speak afterwards, Mr. Rémillard?

**Mr. Rémillard:** I can take the floor immediately, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Very well, go ahead.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Daoust, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to begin by welcoming you all on the government's behalf, and thanking you for having agreed to appear before us. Thank you also for the brief you presented, a brief which is well done, and which, as was mentioned earlier, is clear. You are in favour of a policy which appears, in fact, to be quite clearly for Québec independence. I say independence, because there are perhaps two ways to proceed. We can either say that there are parts of the house which still suit us, so we save them, although it may mean improving them, and we keep them, although it may mean not keeping the rest of the house, if it can be divided up. Or else, we can simply tear everything down, and rebuild using a new plan that we might have. Now, when we talk increasingly of an international context for sovereignty, we often mention relations of sovereign countries with large groups, in other words, structures which enable these groups to manage common elements. And when we speak of independence, we are perhaps, at this point, talking about greater latitude in political action, although this may mean establishing less substantial ties with other governments which share certain common elements. You mentioned, with regard to currency, that you did not want to take a stand on this matter; as for international relations, foreign trade, you are taking a stand, anyway, these will fall under Québec jurisdiction. Your position is therefore very clear-cut. However, on page 16, when you refer to the case of Europe, you say that countries in the European Economic Community do not give up any part of their sovereignty, when in fact, the European Commission is politically independent. We also know that the European Court, Community law takes precedence over the rights of each government. If a Community regulation conflicts with a measure in a given country, the Community regulation takes precedence.

Therefore, these countries which respect their sovereignty have, nonetheless, agreed to have superstructures which control economic, and even sociocultural, in many respects, aspects. Do you believe that, here in Québec, by referring to the Canadian common market, for example, which already exists, that we could improve... We are in the process of finishing talks with the other provinces and, if we like the results, we could join them. However, do you truly believe, Mr. Daoust, that we must tear everything down? Couldn't we build and protect the gains which are really quite precious to our workers, for all Quebecers?

(4:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Daoust:** When you quote our brief, it is

perhaps a good idea to continue, and when we talk about the European Economic Community, we mention that these countries have only freely accepted to take on the means to manage their interdependence. But beforehand, they did indeed have to have their sovereignty. And that is the basic difference.

**Mr. Rémillard:** In the name of this sovereignty...

**Mr. Daoust:** They have sovereignty.

**Mr. Rémillard:** If you would allow me to continue, in the name of this sovereignty that you would like to achieve, is it absolutely necessary that we put aside all the gains that we have...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ...Mr. Rémillard, but we have used up, though we may not have finished, the time allotted your group.

**Mr. Rémillard:** I respect your decision, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You give me hope that others will do likewise, Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Keep hoping, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will now proceed to the questions from the members. I will give the floor first to Mr. Louis Laberge, not to give him an advantage, but because, due to an unfortunate mishap, he did not have the chance to speak to the whole group yesterday. Therefore, he has the right to speak first on two accounts. Mr. Laberge.

**Mr. Laberge:** Oh, well! Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, you have taken me a little by surprise, I don't have anything prepared.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** What a surprise, indeed!

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

**Mr. Laberge:** If I had spoken the day before yesterday, I certainly would have said that, contrary to what you may read in the newspapers or hear on the radio or television, I do believe that it is possible for this Commission to succeed in issuing a report. I believe in it strongly because the people who have expressed themselves up to now have said that they were very open-minded. Sure, there are a few people who have spoken of

independence pure and simple. I don't think they are alone, the one or two people... I think that everyone, we all agree that things can't function like this and we all reject the status quo.

Maybe there are parts of the house that we would like to keep, but we have been thrown out of the house.

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

**Mr. Laberge:** It's pretty hard to choose. Someone asked a question about currency a while back. My dear Fernand, you should have told them that currency is no problem, we'll settle it later, there are engravers in our organization.

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

**Mr. Laberge:** We could arrange all that. Of course, what Québec is expecting from this Commission is not necessarily that the 36 members are all going to agree, reach complete unanimity on everything. I don't think we will achieve that. But I do think that the Commission must issue a simple and very clear report that will allow the population to take an enlightened stand in relation to what transpires before this Commission, in relation to what is said during the presentations of briefs, in relation to what is stated in the briefs, in relation to all that.

It is quite obvious that some people are a little shy. They told us so yesterday. They don't really feel at home. Fine. The Chairman tried to put them at ease, but, all the same, it's true that it's all quite impressive. When I myself look at all of you... It's true. Listen, for the two young women and the young man from the Fédération des ACEF who were here in the Red Room for the first time and who saw this impressive gathering, it has an effect on you, it gives you butterflies. To the extent that, at one point, she answered a question: no, we don't dare come out in favour of independence or sovereignty because we are afraid of losing our grants. Only, she made a mistake and said: we don't dare come out against independence or sovereignty. As far as I know, there's no danger of that happening.

It's very impressive, and I think that the population has the right to expect the Commission to produce a report, to spell out clearly what it thinks. If an agreement is possible, so much the better; if not, oh well, if there are two options, they should at least be clearly identified. We aren't starting from scratch, we are starting from the point of saying no to the status quo. Even our friends who represent the supporters of the French language outside of Québec clearly stated this to us; I think their arguments were terrific. Will English Canada react if Québec decides in favour of sovereignty? I don't think so myself. I think that

when English Canada sees the magnanimous way in which we will continue to treat our English-speaking minority in Québec, it can't help but be more generous to the French-speaking minority throughout the rest of the country. What we want is a democratic Québec and a Québec that achieves democracy while respecting the aboriginal peoples, while respecting our English-speaking minority, while also respecting, of course, the rights of the French-speaking majority, too, and the rights of other cultural minorities.

That being said, all the same, we at the FTQ represent the range of just about every group in Québec today. Fernand Daoust just said that some one hundred thousand of our members are under federal jurisdiction, 35 000 or 36 000 of whom work for the federal government but make their home in Québec. Our English-speaking members, our Allophone members, we have a hundred thousand or something like that, they, too, were represented at our special assembly. I should tell you that at the special assembly, with 2400 delegates, there were 30 votes against, 100 or so abstentions and everyone else voted enthusiastically in favour of the yes side in the referendum. We don't just have French speakers in the FTQ; we have English speakers, Italian speakers, Polish speakers, in short, we represent all these people and I think it's fantastic, because we see the pitfalls. When the time comes to do something, for example, in promoting job training, to try to provide Québec with a system that could rid us of our national shame, the appalling unemployment that we have experienced in Québec for years and years. On this point, too, I am enthusiastic; we have had experience in this area. Twenty-eight different organizations, chaired by Mr. Bédard, succeeded in reaching unanimity on what it would take in Québec to have real job training programs, which would require the patriation of several powers, including unemployment insurance, including immigration, including all that, and there were representatives from such groups as the Chambre de commerce, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, and I don't need to add the "Québec section." The only major group that was not represented, unfortunately, was the Conseil du patronat. But all the other groups succeeded in reaching unanimity. If this was achieved for a forum on employment, I think that we have a chance of achieving something here that is very clear, very precise.

Are my ten minutes up? Do I have a little time left?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You aren't the type of man who should be told that there is still time left, but you still have a minute and a half.

**Mr. Laberge:** Darn! I was watching you and

I didn't want to bother you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** This will be indeed the first time I've said it but I'll take advantage of this moment to ask the people upstairs who are perfectly right to admire what you are saying to please not applaud!

**Mr. Laberge:** So, now I'll understand why I won't get any applause!

So, that's it, Mr. Chairman. It is with the greatest respect of each and everyone's opinion that we will be able to achieve something. And I think that we've made a good start. I think that the briefs that we have had up to now, of course, we would have liked some people to express their opinions a little more clearly and others perhaps a little less clearly, but after all I think that we've made a good start. I think that Québec will not be disappointed by the work of this Commission. The two co-chairmen have already said this several times already. The Commission's report must be tabled on schedule. The report must be clear and the population must be able to make a decision after reading the report, without any shilly-shallying. So, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Laberge. I now give the floor to Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It won't be easy to do my duty after hearing Mr. Laberge but I'll do it all the same. Madam Vice-President, Messrs. Vice-Presidents, Mr. Daoust, your brief is quite easy to read. I read it carefully. And I also read your introduction.

I have a few questions to ask. I will proceed from several points that I have noted down and that you may also want to note. You know me and you know my involvement in the field. We are both part of the same big family: the Steel Workers, etc. We don't share the same positions but we are part of the same big family and I'd like to say that this entitles me to speak about or bring up questions that may be tough or tricky, that could be perceived as tricky in certain circles but that, between us, in our family, are simply questions that we would talk about every day around the kitchen table. So, let's talk face to face.

Starting on page 2, you associate sovereignty and full employment, as if it were self-evident, and perhaps, since your brief is clear and easy to read, you could clarify this association of yours a little more if possible. I saw it as being self-evident. You will say, of course. So, of course means almost saying it? It goes without saying, as they would say in Ottawa. On the same page, you start to tick off the provinces with English-speaking majorities that gave us the message. And you associate

this with their only consensus. I would appreciate it if, in a little while, you could comment briefly on this as I did. It is an unhealthy situation. And we have reached an impasse. It is time to make a decision. So, there are points that are very important to me. The statement you make at the end of page 3 is really something! You don't mince words. The positive changes that have occurred are due to us. You surely will want to comment on this. (4:30 p.m.)

On page 5, I feel like I'm correcting an exam paper. On page 5, I still don't understand the last paragraph. You refuse to engage in the war of numbers. This is a first for a union group. It seems to me that generally you always try to separate non-monetary and monetary clauses, and to put the monetary clauses right before the signature. But, in this case, you refuse to engage in the war of numbers. I accept this, only you will have to get to it eventually in any case, just as we accept that culture comes before economics, we know all the same that culture cannot survive without the economic side of things that allows us to grow.

On page 7, you say that time is not on our side. I myself have often observed that time arranges a lot of things. You need to take the time required to... All of a sudden, we get to what appears to me to be a hiatus. Why is time against us? And who are we? The whole paragraph, but especially the part about time is not on our side. On page 9, you know, you say that just a few months of Canadian monetary policy, unadapted, of course to the needs of the Québec economy, is enough to eliminate thousands of jobs and send dozens of businesses into bankruptcy. This is a statement that I would like to see quantified, since it is qualified here. On page 11... I think time is passing, Mr. Chairman? On page 11, in any case, you raise a thorny problem and then dispatch it in a few lines, the four last lines in the first paragraph. For me, it is quite a problem. You could go farther in identifying it.

Mr. Daoust, and I say this without malice, but with the kind of irony or humour I am capable of, I think that you should have put a rose-coloured cover on your brief. As you know, we are living in an era of interdependence and globalization. If the need to come to terms with two levels of government in Canada disturbs you, don't you think that a sovereign Québec - and this question was raised previously - would also be obliged to negotiate? The answer is obvious, it's yes, it's patently obvious; it will be necessary to make compromises, to make concessions, to modify our own policies. Do you think that such agreements could have an important impact on Québec's social policy? This is my second question.

My third question is simple. The FTQ... what is its degree of sovereignty with the CLC?

Aren't you a Québec branch or division of the CLC or, as wags would say, a province of the CLC? This is my third question.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Daoust, since the member was allotted a period of ten minutes, your response cannot be quite as long as the question. You have three minutes, more or less.

**Mr. Daoust:** My Lord, three minutes! I don't know if you allow your students as much time to answer all your questions, but three minutes is extremely short. I'll start with full employment. We have studied this problem extensively at the FTQ. Our belief is that it is impossible to have a full employment policy in Québec, unless Québec has in hand all the macroeconomic tools, as they say, to be able to successfully carry out such a policy. Read the twenty-sixth report of the Economic Council of Canada. You've heard of it, no doubt. It's a highly respected institution. In their last report, which dealt with full employment, the Economic Council of Canada stated that a country like Canada could not have a policy of full employment unless major economic decisions were highly and strongly centralized. This means that all the policies and instruments that are essential for establishing a policy of full employment are unavailable to us now. If we had the time, more than three minutes, and the two of us could continue our discussion, I could prove to you that a policy of full employment in Canada is a myth. It is not a myth in Québec insofar as there is a will for it. Is it necessary to have the will to proceed? Without a doubt. This is our specific agenda. And there are 300 000 unemployed persons at the moment who support it as well as 300 000 welfare recipients who are suffering from this situation.

If it is not an obsession for a society to have the whole population working, I would ask what does one do when one lives in a society. Unemployment is scandalous. And it is one of the basics, let me say in passing: we will never be able to have a worthwhile policy of full employment unless we have all the tools that are essential in setting up such a policy. I have about a minute left. The CLC, you on the Commission are associated with Louis Laberge, it would be nice if a spokesman from the CLC could be here to answer your question. But, listen, it's not a question of dependence, nor of subordination, nor of relegating the FTQ to a minority status - I have just given you a sketch of Canada - it's not weakness in negotiations that characterizes the relationship between the FTQ and the CLC.

It's full sovereignty, let me say in passing. We have full sovereignty, plus we have agreed on indispensable ties so that we can carry out the struggle on behalf of the union movement

throughout the country. And, in the future, when Québec is sovereign, we will still have ties, it ensues from the right of association, only this time the ties will be truly international, we already have them with workers in the United States, we have them on an international scale, as you know, with very well-known organizations. Gosh darnit, the CLC knows us so well, we have asserted ourselves so much with them. For 25 years, we have been struggling inside the CLC and we have given ourselves all the attributes we need to accomplish our task in the labour movement. You are familiar with the Steel Workers Union, and if I were a professor and you asked me the same question, you who are familiar with the Steel Workers Union, I would flunk you right away.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Daoust, I'll stop you at this threat, since Mr. Hogue's time is up. I give the floor to Mr. Serge Turgeon.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, unlike Mr. Hogue, find that whether it comes from Louis Laberge or Fernand Daoust, what they are saying is so clear and so lucid that it is self-evident, and I think that this is one of the FTQ's strong points.

Mr. Daoust, we can see the FTQ is very sensitive to the problem of immigration, and for good reason. I think that you are entirely correct. You clearly explained a while back to a Liberal MNA a little bit of the type of integration envisioned for immigrants. I myself would like you to be more explicit as to what the FTQ thinks regarding the responsibilities that a sovereign Québec should maintain or increase in relation to its English-speaking minority, since the language problem is essentially a Montréal problem. The problem in Montréal must be solved, because if it doesn't happen in Montréal anymore, soon, it probably won't happen elsewhere in Québec. How does the FTQ view this?

**Mr. Daoust:** As Louis Laberge has stated, Québec must be maintained and built with the greatest possible open-mindedness and with the most irreproachable tolerance, and ties must be maintained with the English-speaking group. This is a group that, historically, has been here for a long, long time, that knows us well, that we know well, that has been endowed with a host of institutions that can in no way be compared with those for Francophones in the rest of the country. This has been abundantly described and proved. It is completely out of the question that any of their rights be reduced in a sovereign Québec. They hold an essential position here. They help Québec realize its full potential, in a

global sense. The relations that we maintain and will maintain with them will allow us to build an even more solid Québec of the future.

Already, moreover... And, while we are on it, Québec is one of the most generous host countries for immigrants, everyone says it, everyone knows it, but it is not a bad idea to bring it up because people in certain places denigrate us on this subject for pretty obvious reasons. Already, Québec - and we can see this in the preamble to the Charter of the French Language - has stated its open-mindedness. The National Assembly intends to pursue, and I quote: "to make of French the language of Government and the Law, as well as the normal and everyday language of work, instruction, communication, commerce and business; [...] the National Assembly intends to pursue this objective in a spirit of fairness and open-mindedness, respectful of the institutions of the English-speaking community of Québec, and respectful of the ethnic minority, whose valuable contribution to the development of Québec it readily acknowledges..."

I can't help from quoting the rest: "The National Assembly recognizes the right of Amerinds and the Inuit of Québec, the first inhabitants of this land, to preserve and develop their original language and culture."

Therefore, on this point we find great openness, tolerance, receptiveness to immigrants, solidarity which must be expressed in major struggles such as the battle for full employment. There are a number of unemployed English-speaking workers. There is an especially large number of Allophone workers suffering under an economic system that is controlled by two half-governments, two demi-governments that share half-powers. Thus, openness in all struggles, in all Québec's undertakings, but in a spirit of tolerance and all the while affirming that Québec is first and foremost a Francophone society that must employ means that can in no way be compared with any other in North America, because of the incredible influence of the sea of English speakers surrounding us. It is there, we must take it into account, without a doubt. But we must use all the means at our disposal, be vigilant and show open-mindedness towards the minorities living in Québec, while at the same time remembering that we, too have rights... When I say we, I mean all Quebecers who assert their rights and choose to make Québec a Francophone land. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We'll now go to Mr. Charles-Albert Poissant.

**Mr. Poissant:** Mr. Daoust, I liked your report so much that I wanted to have the entire question period exclusively for myself. It reminds me of what Bob Hope once said: "This year I won't be paying any taxes because I'm claiming

the city of New York as a dependant".

I am a little surprised by your report because, on the one hand, you say, go to Quebecers and just tell them that we will make the decision to become sovereign and explain the details to them later. If this is the unions' new philosophy, I am very happy that from now on blank contracts can be signed between employers and unions and the details will be discussed later. I like this philosophy very much.

How can we explain your statement on page 3 that we should seize the political and economic levers of power first, then discuss the actions to be taken. On the same page, a little further down, you say that a population cannot select its constitutional status the way one selects a retirement plan, on the basis of financial statements. Must I remind you that we are still obliged to produce financial statements? Can we go to the people and tell them simply: we have chosen this option; we will give you the details afterwards. And, on page 6 you say that the debate must belong to the population, more than mere statistics and economic indicators are at stake and again, because we'll tell them, after the fact...

(4:45 p.m.)

This surprises me... Furthermore, in your opening remarks, you stated that, well, one spoke of fear. It is not so much a phenomenon of fear but rather of people's desire for security and Lord knows that in collective agreements, you demand job security not because your workers are afraid of losing their jobs but because they want a secure way to earn a living, to support their families comfortably, and it's in this sense, I think, that you demand such clauses in your contracts. So, it scares me a little to find out that, if this is the new policy... Furthermore, on page 20, you say that we must make sure that we safeguard the gains of members who are employees of the federal public service. Are we going to have sovereignty that just favours a certain group of unionized employees? And the others, we won't tell you exactly what is going on, but just give us a blank contract, we'll give you all the information you need after the fact.

Mr. Daoust, I would like you to give me... Obviously, I told you in the beginning that I would have liked to have the whole question period exclusively for myself, because I have a multitude of questions to ask you, but there isn't enough time, obviously, to ask them all but I am a bit surprised by this attitude. In addition, a little further on, you speak of our relations with the United States; we must not attach greater importance to them than is due, knowing that Québec exports possibly 80 % of its products to the United States. So now, we have this small country that is going to tell the United States: you know, we are no longer a subsidiary of the United States, we have never been a subsidiary,

there's no question of us becoming a subsidiary. However, the U.S. is like an important big brother to us and when the time comes to discuss economics with the Americans to create and stabilize employment, I don't think that we could just say at the current time: no, we are keeping our distance. Mr. Chairman, there's a multitude of questions, Mr. Daoust, and I would have others, obviously, but I'll let you answer these first.

**Mr. Daoust:** Mr. Poissant, when you read our brief, you should not misinterpret it like this. I will try to be precise with my answer. What we said was that, as far as the blueprint for the Québec society goes, how will Québec eventually take shape? We are keenly interested in the general direction it will take politically, socially and economically. You are no doubt aware of our agenda, it is public record in any case, in which we tackle a number of problems like those you have raised, in which we speak of research and development, productivity, and economic information and training. Lord knows that, on this point, we described it in our brief, the FTQ took the initiative, through its Fonds de solidarité des travailleurs du Québec, to disseminate information, to provide access to information, always for the purpose of creating and maintaining employment.

We speak of full employment in our document and we speak of job training. Here are the facts. You seem to want to make us say: choose sovereignty and we will explain it to you afterwards. Come on, listen! You know, we have gone around Québec, it's a debate that has been going on since well before 1980, that has been discussed everywhere, that has been discussed in our own circles, which aren't always easy for all sorts of reasons, because of their multicultural make-up. Don't think that we don't have dozens and dozens of questions ourselves, but we said: in the Québec that will be forged, that we want to forge, it is the business of political bodies to propose the agenda for Québec society. First and foremost, faced with the incredible failure that has made us what we are or that has not made us what we should be, but that has plunged us into what we have been experiencing for so many years in Québec, let's affirm our sovereignty, our full powers, and after that... We are professional negotiators, you are too, as we are all, who isn't a negotiator, eh?

We know very well that we will have to negotiate a host of things point by point with the rest of this country called Canada. It isn't true that we are telling people that sovereignty is an act of faith, period, and after that, we shall see. That would be using scare tactics, that is a scare tactic, Mr. Poissant, and I can't stop myself from telling you this, because you, too, you know us a little. You have been associated with us and it's not true that we are saying

that. We don't intend to say it, except that at a certain point, I'll go back to what you were saying, we do not object to bringing up numbers. But we have a good memory, too, we remember something that happened not too long ago, in fact just a few days ago. Wasn't it a prime minister that you know very well, Mr. Hogue, who, at one point, during a meeting in Baie-Comeau, said something that he later regretted a little, I believe?

I don't want to repeat everything the Prime Minister of Canada said about the pensioners in Baie-Comeau. But we know that such bugaboos regarding the economic arena could be dangerous at a certain point and it's for this reason that we don't want the debate to be centred on it exclusively. In our document, I'll find it for you quickly, it's on page 6, we say that this aspect appears to be all the more of a threat because, since the 1980s, in Québec like everywhere else, persistent economic difficulties have relegated cultural and social questions and, in the case of the constitutional debate, the national question, to secondary status.

So that's more or less what we want to say in our document. A number of different factors have to be taken into account, profound aspirations have to be expressed and, inevitably, must take into account the whole picture, not just the economy, but an entire range of factors. This is what we wanted to say, Mr. Poissant.

**Mr. Poissant:** Mr. Daoust, if you will allow me, I haven't misinterpreted your report, unless I have the wrong report. But, on page 5, you say, in the next-to-last paragraph, that we should first seize the political and economic levers of power. Then we will discuss the action to be taken. If I have misinterpreted this, maybe my French isn't as good as the others'.

One last question, Mr. Chairman, if you would allow me.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Unfortunately, your time is almost up. Please be very brief.

**Mr. Poissant:** We have been told, for the last three days, that one of the pressing problems, which I agree with, is the duplication of services in Canada and Québec. I'll just give a very simple example, and on this point I'm coming very close to what Mr. Parizeau said a little while ago, a very simple example: supposing that we patriate income tax. I don't know how many federal income tax employees work in Québec. What will you say to them, since we are going to tell them after the fact? You will have a problem telling them, since we don't want to duplicate services, mind you, and now there will only be one tax collector in Québec. You will have to talk to all these people; what do you plan to say to them?

**Mr. Daoust:** Well, we mentioned a little earlier that it was understood that the 35 000 Canadian federal civil servants working in Québec will have a place in Québec. Listen...

**Mr. Poissant:** Good luck!

**Mr. Daoust:** ...Inevitably, inevitably they will, depending on their area of skill, be put to work in a field of activity in which they have expertise. But we said this in the beginning, Mr. Poissant, that the unions in question, which have negotiated collective agreements, it is absolutely necessary that they be once again heavily involved in everything, in the whole process in fact. We can only tell them that they will be full-fledged Quebecers and that they will contribute, like all Quebecers, to the general direction that Québec society takes.

**Mr. Poissant:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The floor now goes to Mr. Lucien Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. Daoust, on the quality of the brief that you have presented, and particularly because it is the first brief to tackle the question of how things are to be done and that already envisions the possibility that there will be two options: sovereignty, and renewed federalism, and which asks questions. How will this come about? How will this be settled? I am very happy that you have invited the Commission to study this question because it's one thing to define projects that are more or less pleasant, more or less utopian, and another to determine how all of this can be achieved concretely. Because, in the days following the Commission, a report like the one we must issue involves on the government's part, the obligation to transform it into reality.

I am very pleased that, for example, on pages 24 and 25 of your brief, you indicate that, in any case, the Commission's findings, whether they represent a consensus or differences of opinions, should be submitted to a referendum. Therefore, for you, the referendum must be a tool.

I would like right now to ask you whether you think that the Commission's approach, the way of finding out on how things are done, how they are achieved, should also be applied to each of the two branches of the hypothesis. For example, the sovereignists have long been accused of being dreamers, of having a beautiful dream for a beautiful country, etc. But how would we achieve it? We remember. The sovereignists have been told this for the last 15 years. But today, the people who espouse, assuming that there is such a thing, who profess



to renewed federalism, aren't they also dreaming, by imagining that federalism can be renewed? Because, to support renewed federalism is also to believe that it can be renewed. It is part of federalism, this ability to renew itself.

So, can we today, from a report such as the one presented by the Chambre de commerce yesterday, which was confirmed by almost everyone from the economic sector who followed, can we imagine that renewed federalism, too, is a real option today? Can federalism be renewed? Don't you think that the Commission must examine the question? In other words, in light of what has just happened in Canada and Québec, in light of our experience of the last 10, 15, or 20 years or even more, of all these failed attempts to patch things up, to save the house, as the Honourable Mr. Rémillard has said. Shouldn't the Commission make a value judgement in its recommendation to the government on the question of whether this type of renewed federalism is achievable as an option? And those who will defend it before the Commission, and I respect them for doing it, should they not also ask themselves the same questions in terms of the question of bargaining power? (5:00 p.m.)

Mr. Poissant used, and rightly so for the most part, the allegory of negotiation, which is quite pertinent. And you, Mr. Daoust, a negotiator, and Mr. Poissant, who is called upon often in his line of work to negotiate with unions and other business partners, you know very well that the essential dimension in negotiation is bargaining power. In other words, what degree of bargaining power would a government in Québec be able to bring to bear in order to champion completely renewed federalism in Ottawa? This is my question, to begin.

Mr. Daoust: Clément Godbout mentioned this to me, and I'll say it to everyone: Mr. Poissant, Mr. Hogue and the others know very well that there is no employer who will negotiate with a union unless the latter proves that the majority of workers in the company want a union and there is, what is called in the jargon, certification.

Québec doesn't have this certification, as we understand it here. We are bound, as you know, and we can talk all we want about renewed federalism, Lord knows we've had a lot of talk about this type of federalism, as you said, for the last 15 or 20 years. During the last referendum campaign, Prime Minister Trudeau strutted on every stage and said to the people of Québec a number of specific times: if you vote yes... no. Excuse me, it was a slip of the tongue. If you vote no, you will be voting yes to major constitutional change. Some people believed him and... I don't want to blame them. Let's not go back to old battles or, at least, to attitudes that

were taken at that time. Things do change, and we want it that way.

What has changed? Things have gone from bad to worse, to be quite frank. The most obvious moment was Meech Lake, minimally. I don't blame you, Mr. Rémillard, or those who accompanied you, but we were asking for the minimum. There, we were rejected almost nonchalantly. Regardless of how it was done, it didn't work. This is the reason why, faced with the referendum results, with what was said to us after the events of 1982, with what we experienced during the negotiations from 1987 to 1990 to work out the Meech Lake Accord, all of this led us, and leads us to an even greater extent, to confirm and solidify our belief that it is not possible, that it is absolutely necessary, to use one of your expressions, Mr. Hogue, with honour and dignity, but for real this time, with full powers, as they say, with the mandates, acquired a little like those in the union movement, to negotiate on an equal footing with our counterparts in Canada.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I'll have to stop you here...

**Mr. Daoust:** This is the reason why, as far as we are concerned, we don't believe, we no longer believe, in renewed federalism.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I stopped you here, Mr. Daoust, because I thought you had finished your sentence, to tell you your time is up. I would like to thank you, as well as the members of your delegation, Mrs. Vaillancourt and Messrs. Roy, Godbout, Ducharme and Lavallée, for your presentation, your patience and the detail that you brought to bear in your answers, and to ask you, in withdrawing, to go as quickly as possible into the antechamber so that those who wish to congratulate you will do it there and not here, so the other group can quickly take their places at the table. Thank you.

So, ladies and gentlemen, if you would like to take your places so that we can resume the sitting with the Québec Human Rights Commission. I would like to remind the group appearing before the Commission that the spokesman has ten minutes to present the brief which has been read by Commission members, and that afterward, we will go to the questions. Mr. Lachapelle will present the brief; would you please, before you begin, introduce the people who are accompanying you to us.

#### **Commission des droits de la personne du Québec**

**Mr. Lachapelle (Jacques):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to introduce the people who have accompanied me this evening. First, Geneviève Hector, who is a

Commissioner at the Commission des droits de la personne du Québec; on my left, Me André Morel, a Commissioner and a law professor at the Université de Montréal; and Mr. Wolde-Giorgis, the Research Director at the Commission des droits de la personne du Québec.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to say that it's a pleasure and an honour for us to have been invited to appear before the Commission to present the views of the Commission des droits de la personne du Québec. It is our sincerest hope that our views will be useful to you in your work.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future will have to deal with the nature of the relationships between Quebecers and power, in other words the importance placed on the rights and freedoms of Quebecers in relation to power.

Regardless of the hypothesis retained as a result of the Commission's deliberations, the Commission des droits de la personne du Québec is convinced that it will be necessary to ensure that Quebecers can exercise their rights and freedoms fully, and that they have the best possible guarantee of protection.

Accordingly, it is highly significant that, in the Act establishing your Commission, the National Assembly made a point of reiterating Québec's profound respect for these principles, principles that undoubtedly will serve to orient the Commission's deliberations and provide an important background for them.

The Commission des droits de la personne du Québec has an interest in the debate initiated by the Commission in more than one respect. The legislator has given the Commission a mandate to promote the principles set out in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; thus the fate of human rights and freedoms when Québec's political and constitutional status is redefined, as well as the guarantees provided to ensure that these rights and freedoms are effectively protected, is of the utmost importance to the Commission. In our brief we will be discussing the following points: the virtues of including the rights and freedoms of Quebecers in the Canadian Constitution or a Québec Constitution; the nature and scope of the constitutionalized rights and freedoms; and, lastly, the fate of the existing Charter and the role of the Commission des droits de la personne.

First, the virtues of including the rights and freedoms of Quebecers.

Regardless of the option your Commission recommends on completion of its work, we believe that it should examine the possibility and advisability of going even further than the existing Québec Charter in protecting rights and freedoms. As you know, the Québec Charter, which is undoubtedly an extremely avant-garde charter, even goes beyond the guarantees of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We believe, therefore, that in constitutionalizing this Charter, we could go much further. In our opinion, constitutionalization of rights and freedoms can provide the surest and most complete guarantee against infringement.

The nature and scope of the rights and freedoms to be included in a constitutional document. We should like to present several comments on newer aspects of what, in our opinion, a constitutional charter should include for Québec, namely a statement of economic and social rights, as well as basic principles regarding the rights of aboriginal peoples, linguistic rights and the rights of ethnic minorities. Our comments regarding the rights of aboriginal peoples and of ethnic minorities are particularly important in that these two groups are not represented as such on your Commission. As you know, in 1976 Québec signed the international treaty on economic, social and cultural rights, almost at the same time as the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms came into effect, which Charter, as you know, devotes an entire chapter to these rights. We are aware that these rights lend themselves with difficulty to the rigid guarantees set out in a constitution and often are only an ideal to be attained gradually; still, recognition of them is one of the foundations of the justice and peace solemnly referred to in the Charter's preamble.

The rights of aboriginal peoples. As the recent crisis in Oka reminded us, it is of the utmost importance that Québec establish harmonious relations with aboriginal peoples, based on respect and mutual trust and recognition of certain specific rights to be spelled out in cooperation with them. In this context, it is important to remember that on February 9, 1983, the gouvernement du Québec approved 15 principles regarding relations between Québec and the aboriginal peoples of Québec. Then, on March 20, 1985, the National Assembly passed a resolution urging the gouvernement du Québec to pursue negotiations with aboriginal nations on the basis of the principles retained in 1983.

A year later, in 1986, the gouvernement du Québec decided to emphasize the economic development of aboriginal peoples and to deal with land claims, and I quote, "in the most dynamic and equitable manner possible".

Economic development is a crucial issue, considering the living conditions of Canada's aboriginal peoples: they have a much higher than average unemployment rate, they're definitely undereducated and they have the lowest income level in Canada.

In the event that Québec opted for a separate constitution, redefinition of the rights of aboriginal peoples, obviously through consultation with those concerned, would have to be a priority.

Moreover, it is important to note the increasing interest in aboriginal issues on the part of international forums, especially the United Nations bodies responsible for promoting human rights. A universal declaration on the rights of aboriginal peoples is being developed by a UN task force, and the draft sets out a series of rights that the member states will be asked to implement. These should be taken into account when aboriginal rights are redefined.

Now, linguistic rights. In the Québec context, it is difficult to separate linguistic rights from human rights and freedoms generally. In the Act establishing this special Commission, the legislator seems to be seeking a certain balance between the rights of the Francophone majority and the Anglophone minority.

It is true that in Québec the rights of the majority to create situations promoting the use of its language, in a North American framework that is predominantly Anglophone, must be respected. But it is equally important not to go beyond what is required to ensure this respect.

The Commission recommends that the main language principles be included on the same basis as the other rights and freedoms, in a fundamental law subject to the same limitations, without establishing any hierarchy.

The rights of ethnic minorities. In the chapter "Economic and Social Rights", the legislator drew inspiration from international texts on this subject and in 1975 included the following statement in section 43: "Persons belonging to ethnic minorities have a right to maintain and develop their own cultural interests with the other members of their group." By including this right, the legislator gives cultural communities respect for their identity and implicitly grants them protection of their own values.

(5:15 p.m.)

When the National Assembly unanimously approved the government's declaration on interethnic and interracial relations on December 10, 1986, it reaffirmed its will to continue to promote representation of various ethnic, racial and cultural groups in all sectors of national life and participation by these groups in the economic, social and cultural advancement of Québec. In this respect, our Commission proposes that the right of ethnic minorities to full and equal participation in the public life and development of Québec be included.

The fate of the existing Charter and the role of the Commission des droits de la personne. The Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms not only governs relations between individuals, but is also binding on the Crown. Therefore, if the Charter's provisions regarding relations between the State and the individual are raised to the level of constitutionalized fundamental rights, it is important to consider the status the Charter will retain and the role

to be played by the Commission des droits de la personne in this regard. Our brief discusses this matter in considerable detail, and may be referred to as required.

A few recommendations. The Commission des droits de la personne has attempted in this brief presentation to make a number of comments to the members of the Commission on the political and constitutional future, with the legitimate objective of protecting rights and freedoms in Québec more effectively and providing a better guarantee for the exercise of them. We therefore propose the following, regardless of the constitutional option retained:

1. Inclusion in a constitutional document of the rights and freedoms granted any person in Québec, to ensure respect for and effective conditions for the exercise of these rights. The rights and freedoms could be included in the Canadian Constitution, in which case they would be binding only on Québec, or in the Québec Constitution, if Québec embarked on sovereignty.

2. The rights so constitutionalized should include political rights, legal rights, economic, social and cultural rights, and the rights of ethnic minorities.

3. Clear and specific provisions should be included regarding the rights of aboriginal peoples in Québec, through consultation with those concerned, with the objective of including them in a constitutional document.

4. The linguistic rights of the Francophone majority and those of the Anglophone minority in Québec should be raised to the level of basic rights.

5. The existing Québec Charter should be revised accordingly and the role of the Commission des droits de la personne should be confirmed.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Lachapelle. We'll now begin with the set of questions by the government party which, because this is a one-hour presentation, is entitled to a total of ten minutes, and Mrs. Pelchat will begin.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As you pointed out, we're entitled to ten minutes, so I'll try to be brief. Mr. Lachapelle, I'd like to thank you for having agreed to present your excellent brief. I have two questions to ask you. The first: in November 1983, the Commission des droits presented a brief, here in the National Assembly, to a Parliamentary Commission. The Commission recommended that we amend, that the government amend section 58 of Bill 101 to permit the use in public signs and posters, and I quote the Commission's recommendation: "...in order to permit the use in public signs and posters and commercial advertising of languages other than French, on the condition that French remain predominant". Given the amendments to

section 58 with Bill 178, passed in 1988, I'd like to know how your position would differ in the event that, as you recommend, linguistic rights were raised to the level of fundamental rights. That's my first question. My second question: to the best of your knowledge, I would like to know if rights and freedoms are in more danger or are less well protected, as certain people seem to maintain, in a country that has a unitary government, as opposed to a federation. I don't share that opinion, but I would like to hear yours, and I'd like to remind you that Mr. Rémillard would like to ask a question afterwards, during this brief ten minutes. Thank you.

**Mr. Lachapelle:** With respect to your first question, perhaps I should refer to the text... That was indeed the Commission's opinion in 1983. But I think that, since then, there have been many events and a Supreme Court judgment that in a sense confirmed what the Commission des droits de la personne said. Also, there was another bill, Bill 178. It's quite obvious that, in the area of language, language isn't... You can't provide for linguistic rights in an absolute manner. But they do have to be provided for to a certain extent. Bill 178 is intended to make these provisions. The Commission des droits de la personne, of course, still has the same opinion on this matter. But of course we recognize that a Bill 178, passed by a sovereign and democratic parliament, confirms certain rights, although the Commission continues to think that what we proposed at the time was entirely acceptable.

Now, your second question. I think I'd like to let my colleague, Me André Morel, answer that question.

**Mr. Morel (André):** I think I agree with you, Madam. I don't think you can easily establish, in principle, that rights are better protected in a federated country than in a unitary country. Obviously, in our history, which doesn't go back too far, there are instances in which one might say courts have rendered decisions to protect rights and freedoms. I'm thinking in particular of a series of decisions by the Supreme Court of Canada in the 1950s, whether in the Roncarelli case or other cases of that kind. But the 1950s was an era when there were no laws or documents that protected rights and freedoms explicitly and directly, not in Québec, not in the Canadian Constitution, and not on the federal level. So, back then, the method we used to challenge a law that we felt ran counter to certain rights and freedoms was to use the division of legislative powers and argue that, for example, a law that the Parliament of Québec had passed at a given time was outside its jurisdiction because it dealt with criminal law, because in general that was always the argument. And the courts could recognize

that, for example, the Padlock Law was of a criminal nature and, therefore, invalid, because Québec may not legislate in this area. But we must also bear in mind that when a court says a certain law passed by a province is outside its jurisdiction, what this means is that the next morning the federal Parliament can pass the same law and it will be perfectly valid because, by definition, by assumption, the law is within its jurisdiction. But now I think we live in an era when rights and freedoms, we have other means, which are charters, which are much more direct and useful ways of protecting them, whether it be the Canadian Charter or the Québec Charter and, in addition, I might remind you that, in the history of legislation and federal executive power, there are a number of acts that aren't especially to Canada's credit in terms of rights and freedoms, such as the way the Government of Canada treated Japanese-Canadian citizens during the War. It was the federal Parliament that passed the War Measures Act. And it's the federal Parliament that, for I don't know how many decades, has maintained the provisions of laws that, for all practical purposes, make communists outlaws. I could continue the list. So I don't think the history of Canada shows that federalism is necessarily more respectful of rights and freedoms than a unitary country.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Lachapelle, you've referred to a concept that I'm rather fond of, and that's the Constitution of Québec. Regardless of the constitutional status that Québec might adopt, it's very clear in law, as is the case of the American States for example, that we could adopt our own constitution, and in this constitution we could very well include a charter of rights and freedoms and a special amending formula that would make it more difficult to amend the charter of rights than to amend other, ordinary laws, which would give the charter a supralegislative value. Therefore, you're referring to the Constitution of Québec when you refer to Québec sovereignty, by saying: in the event that Québec opted for sovereignty. But I would simply like to make the distinction that a Québec Constitution, with a charter in the Québec Constitution, giving even greater legal importance to our rights and freedoms, with respect to economic rights, for example - this could very well be done in a Québec that remained within a federation, initially.

Now, let's take the example of a Québec that became sovereign, regardless of the meaning that we might give to sovereignty, because now sovereignty is relative. If Québec became sovereign, we could nonetheless have a

supranational charter of rights and freedoms that could apply to other partners we might have by association. I'm thinking, for example, of the European Community, where there's the European Convention and the European Court which, even on the European level, covers 22 countries, and therefore is greater than the countries of the European Community, and the decisions of the European Court pursuant to the European Convention take precedence over the legislative provisions of each country. There are notable examples. Belgium, for example, with respect to linguistic rights is a notable example. The **Sunday Times** case in England. So the question I'd like to ask you is this: on the one hand we have the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, which is one of the most complete in the world, and I'd like to tell you just how much your work is appreciated, and, on the other hand, there's nothing to prevent us from having, regardless of the constitutional status that we opt for, a charter covering many other areas, even if Québec were sovereign. I know that Me Morel has done a great deal of work on this matter and I'd like to hear his comments on it.

**Mr. Lachapelle:** He's asking you, Me Morel. Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Morel:** Since you're asking me... I don't think what I have to say is any more original than what Mr. Lachapelle might say, but...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I would ask you to be brief. Time has essentially run out...

**Mr. Morel:** Yes, of course.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ...but it would be useful nonetheless if you answered.

**Mr. Morel:** I'd just like to say that all the hypotheses Mr. Rémillard has cited, the constitution of an independent Québec, or a Canadian federation with provincial constitutions, as in the United States, or the European hypothesis, they're all realizable hypotheses and they're all hypotheses that protect rights and freedoms extremely effectively.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you. So now we'll go on to the next set of questions. Mrs. Harel?

**Mrs. Harel:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Obviously we must approach the matter of rights and freedoms with a certain amount of gravity because we must be constantly vigilant when it comes to the matter of balancing rights. Having said that, while listening to you I thought to myself that obviously everything is evolving, and

I recalled that in 1929 the Privy Council in London refused to define women as persons, the better to be able to refuse them the right to vote. Thus a certain amount of evolution has in fact occurred with respect to equality. What surprised me about the brief you presented was not that you recommended, with reason, that certain rights be constitutionalized, but that you said they must be enshrined in a Québec charter in the case of a sovereign Québec, or in the Canadian Charter; from this one must conclude, because you said so in your brief, that in this case it would be for Québec only. Are we to understand that you're proposing a Québec charter, regardless of the option retained? (5:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Lachapelle:** What I meant was that they would have to be spelled out in the Canadian Constitution.

**Mrs. Harel:** Oh yes, I'm sorry...

**Mr. Lachapelle:** Not necessarily in the Canadian Charter.

**Mrs. Harel:** All right. But why? Because you also say in your brief, and you were entirely right to point this out, that the Québec Charter has a range of rights and freedoms that is broader than that of any other Canadian province and that of the Canadian Charter. So why allow another Parliament to guarantee our rights? Because, ultimately, that would mean that the Senate, the House of Commons, and seven provinces representing 50 % of the population would give us the status we're seeking. Why wouldn't we give ourselves that status?

**Mr. Lachapelle:** Well, you see, it's obviously in the hypothesis, it's understood that we're going through constitutional change, that there are various hypotheses, that there's a sovereignist hypothesis. But there can be another, federalist hypothesis, regardless of the type of link with the federal government, as we state in our brief, and in that case Québec would have to find a way of constitutionalizing its rights. And because Québec wouldn't be sovereign, it would have to turn to a sovereign nation, which itself would have to constitutionalize its rights. But all that doesn't preclude the rights' being in the Canadian Constitution and their applying only to Québec, on our conditions.

**Mrs. Harel:** Think of it, Me Lachapelle, even in a federal system, the only option isn't to have the rights constitutionalized by Canada, or to seek the protection of the Canadian Constitution with the House of Commons, the Senate, seven provinces and 50 % of the Canadian population. There's another option

available in the context of a federal system and that is a Québec Constitution. Why have you disregarded it?

**Mr. Morel:** I don't think we've disregarded it.

**Mrs. Harel:** At least in your brief you have.

**A voice:** No, no, she's not...

**Mrs. Harel:** I hope you haven't disregarded it, but in your brief you have.

**Mr. Lachapelle:** Because just now Mr. Rémillard said just the complete opposite. We haven't disregarded that hypothesis either. What we're saying is that it has to be constitutionalized, regardless of the method, in our opinion; whether it be in the Canadian Constitution or a Québec Constitution that would have special status in Canada isn't important to us, and there's no prohibition on it at all.

**Mrs. Harel:** Oh, I see. Obviously, I would perhaps have hoped, given that Quebecers currently find themselves in archaic situations that are ultimately the effects of the existing constitutional provisions. I'm thinking, for example, of the school elections that will be held in ten days, and I think that a city as cosmopolitan as Montréal will be holding these school elections according to the religion-based system of the past century. So I did indeed read that you want this to change, but I don't think maintaining the existing federal link would let us do so unless, I'd like to point out once again, unless we went through the amending process with the seven provinces representing 50 % of the population.

**Mr. Lachapelle:** Obviously, it's not up to the Commission des droits de la personne to tell parliamentarians how to negotiate this type of agreement with the federal government. Obviously we're making the suggestion. There are choices to be made but it's obviously not up to us to dictate those choices.

**Mrs. Harel:** You were hoping for them.

**Mr. Morel:** I was going to say, all we've said is that, as you pointed out, there are archaic provisions that work against full and equal recognition of all Quebecers, and in this respect we favour linguistic school commissions, something that is perhaps already starting to become a reality.

**Mrs. Harel:** With respect to the economic and social rights you want to see enshrined, am I to understand that you want to specifically include the right to employment? Did you

consider this matter?

**Mr. Lachapelle:** Yes, but we didn't go that far. Obviously it's quite complicated to enshrine the right to work, the right to employment, definitively in a charter even if it's understood that social and economic rights are often there as an ideal to be worked toward, rather than as formally guaranteed rights. So at present we haven't included that right, which doesn't mean it can't be discussed. We didn't include it in our brief, but of course such matters could be included in the same way as the right to housing. But then again the right to a healthful environment could also be included. But these are working assumptions, of course. We haven't gone that far.

**Mrs. Harel:** I note that, in a subsequent phase, you wanted, you say in your brief that you wanted to address certain questions because what you're recommending to us is enshrinement. But you're not very explicit about the rights you would enshrine regarding aboriginal peoples or the rights you would enshrine regarding language or the rights you would enshrine regarding ethnic minorities. In fact, there's a lot of work to be done. When I read your brief, I said to myself that perhaps we would have to recommend to the Chairman that you be hired as consultants to make recommendations to us, because linguistic rights, for example, I don't know whether you're referring to the ones in the Canadian Constitution or the ones that you want to see renewed. Obviously, there's the whole definition of rights. Does a majority define its rights? I don't think there are many examples in the world where the majority deems it necessary to define its rights. Moreover, the linguistic minority, is it the existing English-speaking minority or everyone else who, on moving to Québec, would have the option of joining this community? I don't know whether you've considered these matters, but your brief disregards them.

**Mr. Lachapelle:** Our brief is intentionally silent about these matters, with respect to both aboriginal peoples and ethnic minorities, although at the same time we do advance certain assumptions about ethnic minorities and aboriginal peoples.

We believe that, before including these linguistic rights or linguistic principles in a charter, there must be a consensus. I think this Commission is here especially to hear all parties out and then establish this consensus. But in the Act that created the Commission, we feel there's already an important consensus in the fifth or sixth or seventh paragraph of the preamble: "Whereas Québec has recognized that Quebecers wish to see the influence of the French language assured." And the next paragraph: "Whereas

Québec intends to pursue this objective in a spirit of fairness and open-mindedness, respectful of the rights of (sic) institutions of the English-speaking community of Québec."

In those paragraphs there are certain guarantees, certain legal statements, certain principles that could be included in a Québec Constitution. Of course, we could go further, but this appears to be a minimum in any case. As for aboriginal peoples, we feel it's essential to hear them out before going any further.

**Mrs. Harel:** I'm aware that you want a major investigation into relations between aboriginal peoples and the Québec police authorities. I'd like you to indicate to me, Mr. Lachapelle, given that section 10 of the Charter provides for full and equal recognition and, therefore, rejects any reason for discrimination based, for instance, on language. No one in Québec can be discriminated against on the basis of language. When you say "linguistic rights", do you mean that rights could be attributed to individuals on the basis of language? The right to choose for example. Might there be the right to choose one of the two languages?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** A very brief answer, please. Time has run out.

**Mr. Lachapelle:** When we talk about linguistic rights and you refer to section 10, it's one thing to prohibit discrimination and it's another to guarantee linguistic rights, in any case the ones referred to in the preamble. I think we're talking about two different things.

**Mrs. Harel:** But for whom do you want to guarantee them, these linguistic rights of the Anglophone minority? Can you define the minority? What is it?

**Mr. Lachapelle:** I think maybe it's a little too soon to say exactly what the minority is.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I think we'll have to be content with that answer to that portion of the question, Mr. Lachapelle. We've run out of time and gone into the little time remaining for the chairmanship, which can manage without it, it's not that important.

Now we'll go on to another set of questions. Five minutes each, questions and answers. Beginning with Mr. Béland.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Lachapelle, first I'd like to thank you for your brief, especially for reminding us that Québec has already clearly demonstrated its respect for democratic values and rights and freedoms. I was surprised to read that this is unique and that it's not found in the other Canadian provinces. I think we find that reassuring. At least I find it

reassuring, considering everyone who was concerned about the future of the democratic system if we ever changed our constitutional status. I think it's reassuring.

But I would have liked to see more on this subject and, if we couldn't hear you, if possible, on... I find that your brief discusses the rights of individuals at length, but individuals, after all, aren't isolated, they're part of a society. I would have liked to see more discussion of the rights of individuals as a people, in short, the right of various peoples to self-determination, because that's part of human rights. Especially as we have a regime that's rather special because it's true that we're the majority here. You're very concerned about ethnic minorities, but, in terms of Canada as a whole, we're also a minority, so I would have liked to see you address the matter of protecting the rights of Québec's Franco-phones.

**Mr. Lachapelle:** I think that, rightly, the subject that we were just talking about and constitutionalizing linguistic rights, we are of course talking about the rights of French speaking Quebecers to their language, and when I think of the preamble to the law itself, of course, these are the collective rights, the rights of this collectivity. In any event, it appears to us to be very clear in our brief that we are referring to these collective rights. When we speak of economic and social rights, we are also often referring to the collective rights of the whole population, to the protection of their economic and social rights.

**Mr. Béland:** And every aspect of the right to self-determination.

**Mr. Morel:** Should we put that in the Québec Constitution?

**Mr. Béland:** No, no, but in your brief.

**Mr. Lachapelle:** We, I think that the essential message that we wanted to bring, was that because of the context in which the Québec Charter was adopted, it could not have been constitutional as such, so the Québec Parliament used the mechanism available to it. But in this time that we are in, of all kinds of reform, of all kinds of constitutional changes, this is an opportunity to go further and to ensure that rights and freedoms, and even more than are now in the Charter, are, as Mr. Rémillard said before, situated at the suprallegal level, which they are already, but in an imperfect way.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Guy d'Anjou.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Mr. President, I note that by adding rights to our charters of rights and freedoms, both federally and provincially, we are following the American model somewhat, and, in fact, this establishes in certain cases, a certain priority of judicial power over legislative power. I think that this priority is absolutely necessary when dealing with fundamental rights that are universally recognized, but I would like to have your reaction to this, because, in practice, the National Assembly is required to use the "notwithstanding" clause and is also required in certain legislation, to prevent even the sections of the Québec Charter of Rights from applying to certain legislation. So I would like to know your reaction to that. Which of the two powers should have priority?

**Mr. Lachapelle:** That is a choice that we made, obviously, voluntarily. We believe, as far as we are concerned, that this method, obviously much more rigid, of setting out in a charter using the established expression, of enshrining rights and freedoms in a constitution, entails more rigidity, but at the same time, also brings more guarantees. Amending a constitution is effectively more complex and leaves more room for the courts to interpret rights and freedoms. That does not necessarily mean that a Parliament abdicates its rights. There are still means, later, to amend a constitution to add rights, to give them greater value. So I do not think that the enshrinement of rights should be rigid to the point that, in fact, it no longer allows for the protection of rights up to a point. This is the choice that we made. I think that it is perhaps a choice, I would say, that today is universally recognized as an effective means to recognize rights.

**Mr. Morel:** Maybe I could just add, Mr. d'Anjou, that it is a choice that the National Assembly of Québec made in 1975 when it adopted the Québec Charter, as, since it has applied, that is, effectively, since 1976, the Québec courts have examined the laws of Québec in light of the Québec Charter and ultimately, have declared them to be in conflict. So this is not really a change. The judicial power already has this authority.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** I thank you.

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

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was so eager to attack certain of the FTQ's premises; unfortunately time has run out and now, Mr. d'Anjou has touched on the sense of my question for the Commission des droits de la personne du Québec.

But I would like to follow the line of Mr.

d'Anjou's question. When you speak of a certain balance between collective aspirations and the rights of minorities in Québec, in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, section one now gives protection to the language of the French majority within reasonable limits. Do you think that with this protection, already in our Charter of Rights, there is room in a Constitution, room in a charter of rights and freedoms for a notwithstanding clause, a clause that, in effect, would render the protections of the Charter null?

(5:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Lachapelle:** Listen, we freely... We have not discussed that question. We believe that the whole question of "notwithstanding" clauses and limitation clauses, that this is not the time to discuss them. We think we must first establish principles. We will then see how these principles should be written in a Charter, then we can discuss what we call the technique to preserve them, the technique to limit them in certain respects, the technique to deal with these rights and freedoms and these linguistic rights, since you speak of linguistic rights. But we think it is a little too early to go that far.

**Mr. Morel:** But, however, Mr. Libman, I would add this: the legislative history of Québec since 1976 is not a legislative history where each time the Parliament of Québec has used a notwithstanding clause it was to deny rights and freedoms. I want to give you only two examples: when the Parliament of Québec adopted the Act to secure the handicapped in the exercise of their rights, or when the Parliament of Québec adopted the provisions of the Code of Procedure on the Small Claims Court, it had to put notwithstanding provisions in its laws, but these were to benefit the persons governed by the laws in question. So, you should not imagine that every use of a notwithstanding clause by a Parliament is a totalitarian, dictatorial measure that removes rights from people. On the contrary, it is because the Québec Charter is very broad in the rights that it sets out that use of a notwithstanding clause may often be necessary to attain perfectly legitimate objectives, on which everyone would agree.

**Mr. Libman:** That is why I stressed section one of the Canadian Charter of Rights that gives us reasonable limits within the framework of a free and democratic society. That is why I mentioned section one of our Canadian Charter.

**Mr. Morel:** There you speak of the Canadian Charter and the limitation provision. But in the Québec Charter its counterpart is section 9.1.

**Mr. Libman:** Yes. I know that time is running out so I just want to move to the



second point. The Québec Superior Court, the Québec Court of Appeal were unanimous on the question of section 58 of Bill 101. The Supreme Court of Canada decided that prohibiting the use of English on commercial signs constituted a limitation of freedom of speech and also linguistic discrimination. This was the judgment of the Supreme Court. Is the Commission des droits de la personne du Québec in agreement with this judgment of the Supreme Court?

**Mr. Lachapelle:** Listen, at the time the Commission des droits de la personne had issued an opinion similar to these judgments and to that judgment of the Supreme Court, among others. Now if you ask us if we are in agreement, we wrote things that were more or less alike. Now, as I mentioned to you before, the sovereign National Assembly dealt with its rights otherwise, it dealt with them, for that matter, in conformity with the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, since there is a section 52 in the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms that is a notwithstanding clause and it used that clause. Of course, we are not going to repeat ourselves constantly on opinions that we have already given. The Parliament has decided the subject otherwise. It was also by following a principle set out in the Charter that is a principle of social peace. The Parliament, for its reasons, determined it necessary to establish that law.

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

**Mr. Roger Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In your brief you made allusion to — and I think it was Mrs. Harel who, before, already made reference to it — the necessity of redefining, in consultation with the interested parties themselves, the rights of aboriginal peoples. Could you elaborate on your thoughts concerning the territorial rights of aboriginal peoples?

**Mr. Lachapelle:** Once again, we referred in our brief to declarations of the gouvernement du Québec and to declarations of the National Assembly regarding aboriginal rights. For example, in a declaration of the Cabinet one can read the 15 principles that it established. Québec recognized that aboriginal peoples of Québec are distinct societies that have the right to their culture, their language, their customs, their traditions, as well as the determination, themselves, of the development of this identity. These principles were taken up by the National Assembly that decreed, rightly, that it was advisable to negotiate with the aboriginal peoples of Québec, in fact, on questions of territorial rights. La Commission des droits de la personne did not want to say, here, exactly

what these rights were. What we say as a priority, is that we must hear them, the aboriginal peoples, on these questions. In any case, we feel a little paternalistic at the Commission des droits de la personne, for us to be saying: these are the territorial rights of the aboriginal peoples. I think they should come here to tell you, exactly, what these territorial rights are and how to define them. We do not think it necessary, in our opinion, to go further until they are heard.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Beaudry.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are fears and apprehension of Quebecers in the Outaouais, and before, we heard the QFL telling us that there were 35 000 federal civil servants unionized with their union, and it would seem that they could be assimilated one way or another. I am very convinced that a majority of these civil servants are not in the Outaouais. They are from elsewhere in Québec, Montreal, Québec City, and other cities. And these fears, of certain persons in the region, give rise to questions in the context of a sovereign Québec. If eventually, we had a referendum and the referendum favoured Québec sovereignty, but the region, in order to protect its jobs — because, to put it in context for you, there are 41 000 people there who live by the federal government and private enterprise located in Ontario, which represents 40 % of the employees in the region — so, if these people, in our region, decided to vote against the referendum, when the rest of Québec is in favour of sovereignty, do you think, in this context, that the rights provided in the Charter could extend to such a point as to permit such persons if they wished to, to separate from Québec in order to unite with a future federal district or with a neighbouring province? I know that these are questions that are asked in the region. I know that your law applies only in Québec, but I still ask you the question.

**Mr. Lachapelle:** I am truly incapable of answering such a hypothetical question. But that is not...

**Mr. Morel:** I would say simply that every one here enjoys the freedom of movement.

**Mr. Beaudry:** No, no, movement is not a problem, there, there's no problem. But I am talking about taking a part of Québec, assuming that there will be a referendum in this context, and these are questions that are being asked there, and people are asking the question with a lot of objectivity, I think, because they say: maybe we can't live in Québec if we don't have the necessary guarantees. We lose our jobs, and

we are left with an economy that is completely weakened. Then, in this context of a Québec that wants to leave Canada that says: me, I would like to become sovereign and I'm going, I'm leaving Canada; would we, on our side, would we not have this same choice? These questions are being asked in the region. I have been asked to ask you and that is why I am asking you, if you are able to answer.

**Mr. Lachapelle:** I must tell you that I do not think the Québec Charter answers these questions.

**Mr. Beaudry:** The Charter cannot answer that...

**Mr. Larose:** Réal Caouette answered that.

**Mr. Beaudry:** As we said before... What did Réal Caouette say?

**Mr. Larose:** Réal Caouette wanted the separation of Abitibi-Témiscamingue, the 11th province.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Oh yes! That's true.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You will soon have the floor, Mr. Larose.

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

**Mr. Beaudry:** Then you are not able to answer that.

**Mr. Morel:** No, but in fact I was listening before, hearing Mr. Daoust speaking. I had wanted to say: here are concrete problems. It is not a question of denying their existence or their acuteness. I understand perfectly what you are saying. Here are concrete problems that must be resolved at a given time, but I don't think that it will be by a constitution or by a charter that these problems will be resolved. They must be resolved by those having political authority, as must any other problem that arises in our society, I think.

**Mr. Beaudry:** That, I understand your answer very well, but the question that is being asked in the region, is that we cannot alone or unilaterally think that we can separate from Québec...

**Mr. Morel:** Well, listen...

**Mr. Beaudry:** ...without the consent of the Parliament of Québec.

**Mr. Morel:** We recognize the right of peoples to self-determination. I never heard of the right of the Outaouais' to self-determination.

**Mr. Beaudry:** That is what I wanted to hear you say.

**A voice:** ...the people of the Outaouais.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Gérard Larose now has the floor.

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you Mr. President.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Gérald Larose, Gérard Larose is not present.

**Mr. Larose:** He was provincial auditor a while back, I believe.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Ah! Some people turn out well.

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

**A voice:** Some people turn out.

**Mr. Larose:** Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the comments of Me Morel on the Canadian quality of respecting fundamental rights, coming from a State that doesn't stop excusing itself for what it did in the past to the Japanese, to the Italians, and soon, most likely, to Quebecers, that through its inertia, worked in particular to allow the extinction, for all useful purposes, of a large part of another founding people, ours, in the rest of the country.

I think that for those who have asserted that the federal regime was the guarantor of rights and freedoms, that that was an extraordinary disappointment. I would like to ask you the following question. I find very interesting the way that you break down, a little, I would say, the allocation of rights: economic and social rights, individual rights, linguistic rights. I have two questions. Instead of speaking of linguistic rights, should we not be speaking of the right of the constituents of the society, whether the Francophone majority, the Anglophone minority, aboriginal peoples, cultural communities, to self-determination of their institutions? This is a question that would allow us to measure the debate otherwise.

Second question, when you speak of economic and social rights... To begin with, are the commercial rights, the right to post signs in particular, a commercial right, is this a right that can be considered equivalent to the fundamental rights of persons? Is the right to own property a right that can be considered equivalent to fundamental rights? And, when you speak of economic and social rights, I would like to know - because you seem to identify them as, let's say, objectives or in a word, ideals to be attained - can we not still aim for a certain responsibility. We would have to see what kind, but a certain responsibility where society or

State authorities would have to ensure that at minimum, persons are housed, have access to education, and to employment as well? You have not gone this far, but... Well, these are my two questions.

**Mr. Lachapelle:** Well, listen, I think that in fact, the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms already deals with this type of economic right. When we speak of the right to a basic decent life, that is already in the Québec Charter. The right to own property is also there. I think that all of the rights that you just enumerated are already in our Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, and that is why we are suggesting that we raise them to a constitutional level, since this Charter is already of exemplary scope and I think that all of the rights that you mentioned are already there.

**Mr. Larose:** But, are they fundamental for the same reasons, if I may say so. Example, the right to own property. Someone may still be expropriated. In expropriating, are we violating a fundamental right?

**Mr. Lachapelle:** Well, I think one has the right to fair compensation and that is what is provided in the Charter.

**Mr. Larose:** Yes. And concerning commercial rights, in particular, that to post signs, can we consider it on the same basis as rights...

**Mr. Morel:** I think that the Supreme Court said recently that freedom of speech in artistic or political matters or any other similar matter, is of course, infinitely more important and more precious than freedom of commercial speech and that there is therefore a lesser protection for freedom of commercial speech, for example in respect of signs, or something of that nature, than the noble freedom of speech to which we always refer when one expresses his ideas, in a political, literary, artistic or other sense. This is really above it, I think. There, in fact, between these two types of freedom of speech, I think there is a hierarchy.

**Mr. Larose:** Then, if I understand you well, even the judges of the Supreme Court of Canada do not treat us as totalitarians if we infringe on signs.

**Mr. Morel:** I did not read that in the judgments of the Supreme Court.

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

**Mr. Larose:** Well that elevates them in my esteem. I thank you.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Well, on that note, Mr. Turgeon now has the floor.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you. Briefly, you told Mr. Larose that the right to own property is a fundamental right. I, what I want to ask you, do you not think that copyright should come under the provinces, since copyright is an intellectual property right?

**Mr. Lachapelle:** Well, this will also form part of the arrangements and requests that Québec could eventually make, obviously in constitutional agreements or otherwise. It is certain that the intellectual property right is surely a fundamental right that could be set out somewhere in a Charter.

**Mr. Morel:** But it is perhaps more for organizations of writers or artists to come and say that maybe the federal legislation on copyright does not respond to the notion that Quebecers in that area have of what copyright protection should be. And, effectively, of course, as with any other power, it is a power that may be... that may move from the federal to the province, in the event of, of course, a new division.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Well then, I would like to thank the members of the Commission des droits de la personne who have appeared before us. And I thank them for the very interesting brief that they submitted. We have reached the time limit for this afternoon. We will resume again at 7:30 p.m. with the Association des commissions de formation professionnelle, and for now the sitting is adjourned.

(Proceedings adjourned at 6:04 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:38 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** To order, please! Please take your seats.

The Commission resumes its work. We welcome tonight the Association des commissions de formation professionnelle. The group is directed by Mr. Claude Fontaine, who will make the presentation. You know, Mr. Fontaine, that you have ten minutes to present the brief that the members of the Commission have received and read. We will then proceed to the questions.

Well, if you would like to introduce the people that have accompanied you and then go on to the presentation of the brief...

**Association provinciale des commissions  
de formation professionnelle**

**Mr. Fontaine (Claude):** Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to begin by introducing my colleagues. On my right, Mr. Yvan Houde, APCFP consultant and director general of the Mauricie-Bois-Francs CFP.

**A voice: Left.**

**Mr. Fontaine:** On my left. On my left, Mr. Nelson Laflamme, vice-president, director general of the Abitibi-Témiscamingue CFP; on my right, Mrs. Huguette Boily, executive vice-president of the APCFP; on my right, Mrs. Alberte Caron, APCFP consultant, president of the Québec City CFP.

Mr. Chairman, for 80 years, successive Québec governments, of whatever political stripe, have traditionally associated vocational manpower training with social policy and adult education, areas in which its exclusive jurisdiction is less contested. The federal government, on the other hand, has in particular attempted to prove that such training is part of economic policy, which would authorize it to use its spending power in this area.

Québec has always been distinguished from the other provinces by its desire to act in the fields of education and manpower, and to play the determining role in setting policies to be adopted within its territory; 80 years of demands which, until the present day, have resulted in continual encroachment by the federal government.

Recent federal actions, such as employment planning, reform of unemployment insurance and the proposed national commission on training are but further signs of federal encroachment on Québec jurisdictions. It must be pointed out that negotiating jurisdictions in this area of increasing sensitivity for Québec's economic health is most difficult within the present constitutional framework.

Since the advent of free trade, the Québec government has adopted a clear orientation in the area of manpower adjustment, stressing partnership and the regionalization of responsibilities. The growing encroachment by the federal government in this area, with its centralizing trends and its lack of respect for fundamentally provincial jurisdiction works in the opposite direction. Until recently, the manpower field was subject to federal-provincial agreements, but it appears today that the present federal trend is to avoid negotiation and impose its own strategies.

For several years, in management and union circles, we have frequently deplored the absence of a Québec manpower policy. Of course, the concept of manpower policy has greatly evolved

over the past few years. The growing number of factors influencing labour supply and demand and the decreasing complexity of inter-relationships between them impose on such a policy a wide spectrum of concerns. However, the need for a policy is inherent in this multiplicity of problems.

For us, a manpower policy is a global strategy, which must involve all partners within the world of work. Its main objectives are to harmonize action by government, management and unions, to ensure the development and adaptation of the Québec labour force and to make effective use of all its potential. Such a policy would be warmly welcomed by the world of labour.

A manpower policy must not be used only to rationalize government action; it must be just as useful to labour circles, who have to make daily decisions in the area of human resources. A manpower policy which would make explicit this global manpower development strategy would certainly enlighten businesses in their decision-making and planning processes.

Two types of conditions must be met for such an enterprise to succeed: the first concerns the involvement of partners and the second concerns the tools which Québec must possess in order to succeed.

Insofar as the Québec government becomes committed to setting up a manpower policy which could have a significant impact on company and union policies, it would have to concretely involve them in its design and development. It is on the basis of a wide consensus between government and labour circles that such a policy may take shape, become embodied in the practices of the largest number of socio-economic actors and generate a new dynamic in the development and management of human resources.

A real exercise of cooperation and consultation is needed at the national and provincial levels and, to do this, Québec has no shortage of resources or structures. The success of this cooperation will have a multiplier effect on the interest of partners from the world of work and involve the Québec government.

It is imperative to introduce in Québec a real manpower policy which favours the adaptation of its workers and businesses to the rigours of a world economy in the midst of change. Québec must have under its control all the tools which will allow it to apply this policy in accordance with its objectives. In other words, it must repatriate under its exclusive control the areas of jurisdiction inherent in this policy. Without this broad range of powers for the Québec government, any attempt to work out such a policy will be illusory.

(7:45 p.m.)

The vocational training commissions and all the socioeconomic partners they represent feel

directly targeted by the directions which Québec will have to define in the coming months. In the present context, in which it must make crucial choices with respect to this political and constitutional future, the Association provinciale des commissions de formation professionnelle must express the position of all its members with respect to the conditions for developing Québec's labour force.

We recommend:

That the Québec government as quickly as possible begin negotiations with its federal counterpart on the process of repatriating under its exclusive jurisdiction all areas of competence affecting the development of manpower.

That the Québec government as quickly as possible begin the process of developing a manpower policy in conjunction with its partners in the world of labour and that the vocational training commissions, as regional manpower development structures, be called upon to contribute directly to this process.

That the Québec government, as part of this manpower policy, aim at harmonizing its many laws governing manpower, that it continue the process of revising the Act respecting manpower vocational training and qualification in order to develop in-service training and that it give concrete expression to its intention to create manpower development commissions as specialized centres in this field.

That the Québec government regionalize the decision-making process in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the human and financial resources which it devotes to developing the economy.

I would invite my colleagues to answer questions.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Fontaine. We will begin with questions from the members. First, Mrs. Rosette Côté.

**Mrs. Côté:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. I must congratulate you on your brief. I think that you have made an excellent diagnosis of manpower training needs within the economic reality of the present time, with the globalization of the economy and the growing importance of technology. As well, what I appreciated in your brief is the fact that you also consider the social problems which arise from manpower problems, and in particular the realities which affect, among other things, illiteracy, unemployment, and the fact that this impedes the development of human resources. I find this very interesting. Thirdly, I also find it interesting that you place certain content elements within a manpower policy, notably cooperation among the various social actors on this question. You therefore ask for repatriation of powers and, on page 10, moreover, you describe it very well when you call for

everything relating to the areas of management, manpower, employment assistance, labour market integration, the costs of manpower productivity, mobility, job sharing, and the training of worker and unemployed.

And you have also spoken of the reality of adults. Indeed, I must tell you that the Fédération des commissions scolaires and the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec, the FTQ, are of the same opinion with respect to the repatriation of these powers and the fact that the Québec government should take control of the whole reality of training. And you say that you have been negotiating for 80 years; but I think that you still believe in Québec's ability to negotiate the repatriation of these powers. I find that you are very optimistic, but I respect that. However, should we succeed in negotiating the repatriation of these powers from the federal government and make education and manpower training and upgrading and in-service training truly the jurisdiction of Québec and the funds and resources are available, at that time, if you succeed in repatriation, how do you see the relations between the CFPs, the teaching institutions and the school boards which this morning also told us that all of education and the reality of adult training are important in Québec since the transformation of the economy will lead many adults to upgrade their skills. How do you see the relations between the CFPs, the educational institutions and the school commissions, in the hope that we do succeed in repatriating these powers?

**Mr. Fontaine:** I would ask Mrs. Boily to answer, please.

**Mrs. Boily (Huguette):** Indeed, if we rely on what is taking place at present, it is very clear that we are not the only ones concerned with vocational training in Québec. We are first and foremost a structure which really makes it possible to estimate the needs of manpower in all regions of Québec, first of all, and to manage training programs. When training programs are, I would say, financed first of all by a CFP, it is clear that the implementation as such of the programs must be carried out by the educational institutions, Cegeps, or school boards. And I think that the cooperation we speak of in our brief must take place through socioeconomic partners and also through vocational training commission educational institutions. I would perhaps ask my colleague, Mr. Laflamme, to describe in a little more detail this aspect of the mandate as such held by the vocational training commissions.

**Mr. Laflamme (Nelson):** Thank you, Mrs. Boily. If we place ourselves at the regional level, you are aware that the vocational training commissions are really organizations devoted to

regional development. To do this, we are associated with real partners from the community, representatives of employers and wage-earners.

It is in this sense that Mrs. Boily said a moment ago that we form a sort of link between the world of work and the world of education. We are a bit like a broker, I should say, at this level, collecting on the one hand the needs and bringing together of course – since we hope for it more and more – the main parties concerned with the response to these same needs. It is certain that we need educational institutions to be able to respond more effectively; a whole framework and expertise in this respect, it is in this sense that it must also be developed.

**Mrs. Côté:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Jacques Proulx.

**Mr. Proulx:** Yes, a bit of a follow-up to Mrs Côté's question, but I would like to enlarge upon it somewhat. During the past few years, for example, with the new challenges we have faced, in particular free trade, have you had particular operations or developed particular programs to adapt the labour force, either before the treaty or during the treaty, etc.

**Mr. Laflamme:** Definitely, Mr. Proulx, because more and more I think that we have to stick with the socioeconomic reality of the labour market. To do this, it is in this sense that we have adapted programs and training measures directly to needs. It is in this sense that we have developed customized training programs and programs such as Recycling and upgrading. Certain other programs have been able to adapt thanks to very good consultation and cooperation with educational institutions and also a great deal of cooperation from businesses themselves, as they were able to provide us with certain equipment to better train their workers.

**Mr. Proulx:** If Québec had all the powers, to adopt the hypothesis which you suggest here, that we repatriate all the powers, do you think you could have done better?

**Mrs. Boily:** Yes, definitely, since even if there is a great deal of money invested in vocational training in Québec, you know that we still would have benefited... I think our clients, business and individuals, would have benefited indeed from additional funds, I would hasten to point out.

**Mr. Proulx:** But I would still like to understand. Why do you say that they would have benefited from additional funds, if you tell me that over the past few years, you have

adapted in spite of this, you have had special programs, you have adapted programs, you have offered services which responded to the demand? What are the deficiencies, because if I understand you, they still exist at the present time? You have not been able to carry out your mission in complete enough fashion, and things like that. What are the major deficiencies which have meant that you have not been able to respond more adequately to the needs as you might have in the face of these challenges and others which will be faced, whether we speak of GATT negotiations, or of all the changes taking place at the present time around the world?

**Mrs. Boily:** I think that in relation to this element, it is clear that, as the federal government... That why we ask for the repatriation of all training powers is that at the first stage, programs, if we repatriate, would be based more on specifically Québec objectives, which is absolutely not the case at present. Furthermore, there would necessarily no longer be duplication of structures, networks, programs and services and therefore more coherent action.

Furthermore, clients would also be much less confused with respect to who does what. At present, everyone sees this, it is clear that it is very difficult for a business or a worker to find his way around this machinery which is both federal and provincial.

Furthermore, by repatriating federal programs, it is obvious for us that we will also repatriate program budgets, as well as the related operating budgets. So these are most of the reasons why we think that in fact it would be an excellent thing.

**Mr. Proulx:** A final question, Mr. Chairman. Would you see a change in your own role, if Québec should repatriate all these powers? The role which you play at the present time, do you see changes, more powers, more shared powers, or things like that?

**Mr. Laflamme:** I think that we have also clearly stated this in our brief. What we hope for is that there will not be 14 administrators in human resources development, in the development of Québec manpower. And to do this, it is in this sense that we encourage the government to pass laws to this effect. As a way of saying: We are making a manpower and manpower development policy for ourselves, and we are setting up an adequate organization to put it into operation and it is in this sense that we have suggested amending the Act respecting manpower vocational training and qualification to create what we said in our brief, manpower development commissions. It is in this sense that we actually see the single administrator of specialized centres which we spoke of just now.

**Mr. Proulx:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Gérard Larose?

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I must confess that in all the cases which I have had to deal with as chairman of a union organization, I have known two equivalent puzzles: that of the CSST and that of vocational training. Only to know its most superficial features takes hours of study. You have already given a short description on page 3 where for employers alone, for example, there are 140 forms, in which the term "employer" is given 18 different definitions. I think that this illustrates a little the total muddle we find ourselves in. But this afternoon, while I was mentally getting ready for this evening's work and you were first, I told myself: This is only going to take about five minutes because it happens that one of the problems which we have worked on a lot in the forum on employment is just this question of vocational training, where we quickly arrived, I would say, at a consensus which included all the partners. And Friday of last week, at the standing committee on manpower adaptation, we provided a consensus which brought together the Conseil du patronat and the Québec government. So I said to myself, for that to last more than ten minutes, the Opposition party will have been obstructive because everyone agrees...

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

**Mr. Larose:** ...that for vocational training everything must be repatriated as quickly as possible. First, there are many millions involved, and millions are being wasted because there are repeated collisions on the ground. So if those still holding to a thesis which is said to be not yet extinct wish to tell us that in the renewal of federalism, it will be possible to reduce 18 different definitions to 17 and have 139 forms rather than 140, I would say that the very fact that we have two actors on the stage, two levels of government on the stage leaves room for political competition, which is not all that bad when you are trying to get reelected, but all this is to the detriment of a real strategy. And it seems to me that many people have been saying for years, especially since the advent of the Free-Trade Agreement, that if we don't pull our socks up and just get to work on manpower training, and make a real effort not to be outclassed, well, we will pay dearly for this type of muddle, which has been going on for so long.

What I would perhaps like to ask you is because your proposal - perhaps it was before the agreement reached on Friday November 2, yes, something like that - do we have to go and negotiate right away, in your opinion, because this is what you say, or should we include this

in the overall package? In terms of strategy, what are your views and recommendations?  
(8:00 p.m.)

**Mrs. Caron (Alberte):** Immediately, and we have written immediately, as quickly as possible, because this is urgent. The economic situation in Québec is urgent in this respect, with respect to manpower. People are suffering right now.

**Mrs. Boily:** Mr. Larose, I think that you in fact are right. This is now one of the first times in Québec that we can see that employers and unions have reached a consensus with respect to repatriating powers with respect to training. In our brief, we stressed that for 80 years the various governments, of whatever stripe, have been constantly calling for the repatriation of powers or asking that Québec be given greater autonomy with respect to vocational training. And I think it is high time. If we have been waiting for 80 years, why should we have to keep on waiting? For how long, I don't know. But, in our opinion, this is urgent enough for the government to ask as quickly as possible, and the repatriation of powers to be negotiated as quickly as possible.

**A Voice:** O.K. Mr. Laflamme, please.

**Mr. Laflamme:** Just to add a bit, Mr. Larose, I think that I am very happy in passing, that you bring this added reinforcement to our brief. When we often speak of momentum - you just spoke of consensus at the employment forum, consensus at the standing committee on manpower adaptation - I think we should continue at the same time and say: Now that all socioeconomic partners in Québec are finally in agreement to go ahead, to go further, to really define our manpower policy in Québec, I think it is time.

**Mr. Aubre:** Just to add, Mr. Larose, at present we are going through a difficult economic period. During this time, other countries in Europe, Asia, etc. are not experiencing a recession. And it is not in businesses, when they are running nearly at full capacity, that we will find time to train manpower and they have time for training in order to keep up with technological change.

One of the best periods to train manpower is the difficult period we are going through right now. This allows business to retain its labour force, and all its experience, but to adapt it and to prepare for the coming upturn, because there will be one. And at the same time, this avoids getting too far behind our competitors. We are in a global market.

**Mr. Larose:** Perhaps for the benefit of the Commission, I would add that at the federal level, following a poll or a study commissioned

by the National Productivity Council - at any rate, it's more complicated than that, but it comes down to this - they came together with the report with a proposal to have a "coast to coast" commission on vocational training, a national commission conflicting head-on with Québec's jurisdiction. And, at the standing committee on manpower adaptation, all the partners undertook, first of all to say to the Minister, Barbara McDougall, that we would have nothing to do with it and that, secondly, none of the partners would participate, including all the organizations on the employers' side, and that, also from the employers' side, none of the partners would participate in the Canadian or national round table or... I don't remember what it was called... the national commission proposed by Barbara McDougall.

Then besides that, I think that this is an area which is increasingly clear for all the partners and which indeed falls clearly within traditional Québec claims.

**Mr. Fontaine:** I think that we have clearly indicated in our brief, Mr. Larose, that in Québec we are indeed privileged. We have a structure with socioeconomic partners which answers well, and it is in this sense that we said that we should not once again duplicate other organizations or other structures. It is also in this sense that we should like to put less stress on creating new organizations. I think that people would do better to cooperate with the existing structure, which is already quite effective in itself.

**Mr. Larose:** For Québec, you who are in it full time, I would say, the total amounts of money from the two levels of government comes to how much money available for vocational training?

**Mrs. Boily:** At present, if we look at the federal level, employment planning programs, at present \$ 425 000 000 is invested in Québec by the federal in this employment planning program. The budget for the Canada-Québec agreements on institutional training amounts to \$ 139 000 000 in 1989-1990, according to the figures. So that means, with these amounts, if the new type of employment which the federal government wishes to implement through its skills investment strategy, we may estimate... I discussed this today with the Deputy Minister of MMSR and, they estimate amounts at about \$ 350 000 000 the amount which Québec could recover from the \$ 800 000 000 of unemployment insurance for training.

**Mr. Larose:** I would like, if you could allow me 30 seconds...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Very

quickly please.

**Mr. Larose:** O.K. A bit of information, because there is a new context with Bill C-21, the Unemployment Insurance Act. I would like to inform the Commission that, at present, the federal government is no longer contributing to the fund. It is now a private fund, built up from the contributions of employees and employers. It is a little indecent that a level that sticks both feet into our jurisdiction finances its encroachment with our own money. It has become, we can say, quite shameful. That's the least we can say.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We now go on to Mr. Claude Béland.

**Mr. Béland:** Am I interrupting you, Mr. Larose?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** No, no. He managed to stretch it out a bit. You may proceed.

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

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you. This surprises me a little. I think that we have all reached a consensus here. I have had the privilege of taking part in all the consensuses Mr. Larose has mentioned. In spite of these consensuses we have here, there is one partner with whom we have a great deal of difficulty, that is, the federal partner which, instead of following the process of negotiations which has continued since 1910, rather goes in the opposite direction through the creation of its national commission on training. What you suggest that we recommend here as a parliamentary commission on the Constitution, is this really what you recommend that we say to the Québec government, that it should undertake negotiations? I have a bit of trouble with that. Try to help us a little. Here we say: It's obvious, we have to do something. What can we say to the Québec government with reference to the Constitution if you say to us: Ask the government to negotiate a constitutional repatriation? Is that sufficient in your opinion? Will we settle the problem like that?

**Mr. Laflamme:** I would be inclined at the beginning to say that we don't have to repatriate what we already have. We first have to occupy the field, then deal with our problems. If we want to deal with them, if we need a qualified and competent labour force, to be able to respond to the challenges of tomorrow, I think that we have to define a proper manpower policy. It seems to me that it is time to have a blueprint for society which includes a manpower policy. To say, in coming years, in five years, where do we want to be, in ten years, to deal



with this globalization of markets: You see in Germany how those people – what's the word? – they take a stand to become able, then they support each other to be able to develop even further. It seems to me that we should be capable of defining here in Québec, of course with all of Canada and even with the United States, the Americas, to say where we want to go. Do we want to be competitive too?

**Mr. Béland:** Taking all the impressive figures you have mentioned, even leaving that to another level of government, how do we settle this? I find that the problem is not simple. How do we really settle this? You say, by the way, if all areas of jurisdiction affecting manpower development, so is it just education and training?

**A voice:** Of course not.

**Mr. Béland:** What is included here, other than that?

**Mrs. Boly:** Mr. Béland, on that, what our brief says, our position, in fact, is to say that what we demand, if I dare use the term, what we would like, is that Québec basically have real autonomy that is complete with respect to all powers relating to manpower development. And to do this, what I said just now, before, it's true that the various governments have tried to negotiate, I would say, with the federal level but there was not at that time what there is now, a desire on the part of all the partners, employers and unions. And I think that in this sense, the Québec government could effectively negotiate with the federal government for complete autonomy with respect to manpower development.

**Mr. Béland:** O.K. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Does that answer your question, Mr. Béland? I will now go on to the questions of the other two groups, but I would remind the Commission members that there is still time remaining from the 40 minutes for members. If anyone would like to signal the staff we can go back to them later. Those of course who have not already had their ten minutes this evening. We now go on to Mrs. Harel.

**Mrs. Harel:** Mr. Chairman, I can only speak for myself, I cannot speak for my colleagues. I would skip my turn this time if I was sure that around the table we agree unanimously on the urgency of repatriating everything relating to the development of manpower in Québec. I am going to speak for example because I am not sure of unanimity. I am certain that there is a consensus. It reminds me a little of the litanies in the processions when I was a child. You know, the ones that were repeated all the time,

because it is like a litany. We read in your brief for example on page 13 – I am not blaming you – but when we read that the complexity and inefficiency of power sharing in the areas of manpower lead to costly duplication and eternal quarrels between the two levels of government. Then we find passages like that obviously throughout the brief. And yet the situation is alarming and you describe it well.

You remind us that a quarter of the adult population of Québec has less than grade nine, that Québec has a rate of illiteracy of 28 %, you tell us in your brief, and especially that by the year 2000 – which is not far off – well, more than one worker in two will need to have a college level education, that is, more than 17 years of schooling. Thus, it is certain that there is a sort of emergency and that deep down we have the feeling of being hurried by events. On page 13 of your brief, you point out that whatever the constitutional framework, Québec must first of all demand all federal budgets which are input. I will continue where Mr. Larose left off. With the new reform of unemployment insurance, which means that in future all these manpower training and even employment creation programs will be financed in large part on the basis of a tax on wages levied by the unemployment insurance fund, how will it be possible to demand funds without indeed modifying the constitutional framework, since this constitutional framework means it is administered by the unemployment insurance fund, given that the federal government has withdrawn?

**A voice:** Mrs. Boly is going to answer you.

**Mrs. Boly:** You say: How to succeed in negotiating repatriation without necessarily negotiating or revising the constitutional framework? It is clear that in our brief, as I said a moment ago, our main recommendation is that Québec should regain complete autonomy with respect to manpower development. However, the shape and the terms and conditions of this autonomy were not really part of our remarks, as you have seen. And I do not think that it is up to us to determine the constitutional framework, but that it is up to you, to you and other participants to develop strategies so that action whose urgency is pointed out to you may effectively take place.

(8:15 p.m.)

**Mrs. Harel:** Yes, because, obviously, in the context of the reform of unemployment insurance, we must understand – we read in your brief, for example, on page 14, you speak of the budget on institutional training, the \$ 139 000 000, but you are certainly aware of the situation. The minister responsible, moreover, spoke of this, that the federal government wishes to withdraw with respect to this

\$ 139 000 000 which it will gradually reduce beginning next April, so that by 1994 it will have completely eliminated this amount, because in the final resort the unemployment insurance fund will finance the Canada-wide training policy, that is, the workers and employers. How is it possible to act without trying to get the jurisdiction, which was transferred to the federal government after the Second World War? We can ask for anything, but in a negotiation context we do not have the power to decide. In your opinion, will the new reform of the unemployment insurance context also change? In the end, you have not been able to examine if that would bring changes.

**Mr. Laflamme:** It is certain that we have not yet looked at all possible scenarios for this. But it remains that if we wish to support economic development with our primary capital, which is human capital, it will be necessary to develop a culture of manpower development here. Training is a tool for building this culture. Greater involvement by the principal actors in this policy will be necessary. I am thinking of business, I am thinking of labour. If we go at it with a tax or with some sort of tax shelters to provide greater encouragement, a stimulus, it will also be necessary to involve labour; I think that if we take an executive who wishes to get ahead, he will go directly to university to take courses to ensure his own development within the socioeconomic context we are in. Business will have to do the same thing and invest more in its own human capital. It is this sense that I say that the culture of manpower development is very important in this respect and we will have to promote it together.

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

**Mr. Brassard:** First, I have noted with a great deal of interest your description of the present muddle. If there is anyone well placed to describe it, it is you, the vocational training commissions working on the territory, given your vocation. But what surprises me is the fact that we have been trying for 80 years to repatriate, recuperate, to make Québec completely autonomous with respect to manpower and vocational training. I am obviously in agreement with the objective and the claim. But you say at the same time that it cannot continue, that it is urgent. It is too essential, too important for Québec. If we do not grant the Québec government all the powers in this area, we will then find ourselves at the end of the line in the economic field. There is a gentleman who mentioned, among other things, other countries in the world which are getting ahead, and we are in danger of ending up at the end of the line economically with respect to training,

because of this muddle. And then, you write in your conclusion that until recently, the manpower field was the subject of federal-provincial agreements, but it seems now that the present federal trend is to ignore negotiations and impose its own strategies. It has gotten worse. At least before, we could negotiate, it didn't work, we never got anywhere, but there was at least someone with whom we could talk. Now, it is only a ploy. The federal counterpart walks in, pulls a fast one, and visibly tries to impose its own strategies. I would like first of all to record formally that this should be vested in Québec, and that it is necessary to undertake negotiations, fine. I am pleased that after 80 years we recommence negotiations. The present Minister of Income Security is also prepared to engage in negotiations. But I simply ask you the question, if negotiations – as is very possible, since the federal government is still trying to pull the wool over our eyes – if the negotiations are not successful, and there is really an emergency, you have mentioned it, what shall we do? What do we do? Do you have an answer to that? What do we do?

**A voice:** We won't ask you.

**Mr. Aubre:** I think that the present context is very different from the contexts we have seen previously. At present there is much more openness to reviewing the division of powers. There are many things which have been questioned since a certain long hot summer. The opening is there. There is also in Québec...

**Mr. Brassard:** At the federal level?

**Mr. Aubre:** ...it's general throughout the country. There is an openness about a review of powers. There is an openness. It is there. On the Québec side, there is at present a very strong consensus – as Mr. Larose pointed out, and Mr. Béland as well – and that did not exist even one year ago. Québec now has a political strength which it did not have a short time ago. Our federation is being called into question a lot, and this creates an openness towards revising things. In this context, there is room to negotiate, we think, and we have spoken of negotiating things. Now, in the eventuality, as in your very precise question, that negotiations do not lead anywhere for the 81st or 82nd year, it is true that this is urgent, and I think that Québec should then take measures, the decisions which have to be made under such circumstances to effectively repatriate the manpower field as quickly as possible. This is what we advocate, because it is very urgent. You say that it is too complex, you say that we are in a good position, but there are those who are even better placed than we are to explain to you how complex it is. These are the business leaders or representatives

of workers who no longer know where to turn to solve their problems. We can only tell you this, but they know it better, because they experience it every day. Talk to small business managers who need to train their labour force at the present time, but you probably hear all kinds of stories. There was a commission in Québec a few years ago which was to re-establish a little order in adult education, the Jean Commission. Anyway, if anything was settled, I hope someone will tell me what it was. It is now 20 years, nearly 20 years that I have been in the CFP, I have been through nearly all the growth, development, and difficulties, I have seen them. I have been through all that.

**Mr. Brassard:** But, sir...

**Mrs. Boily:** I would perhaps like...

**Mr. Brassard:** Has this changed since your brief was written?

**Mr. Aubre:** Has what changed?

**Mr. Brassard:** Because you tell me that there is now an opening to begin negotiations which could probably lead somewhere, while I have just read your brief, where you say that the present federal trend is to dodge negotiations and to impose its own strategies, so they not only refuse to negotiate, but they do everything themselves. So has this changed since then?

**Mr. Aubre:** I have not made myself clear, Mr. Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** Yes.

**Mr. Aubre:** I think that the opening is in the people. People are more open now.

**Mr. Brassard:** O.K. All right. O.K.

**Mr. Aubre:** And often the political level reflects the people quite well.

**Mr. Brassard:** Sometimes.

**Mr. Aubre:** But there is at present an opening among the people to review the division of things.

**Mr. Brassard:** O.K. All right. Good.

**Mrs. Boily:** Perhaps to add a little to what you said regarding the fact that the federal government is slowly but surely imposing its own strategies in manpower development, among other things through the national commission on training. It is clear that, for us, this national commission which wishes to give, which still

wishes to take, I would say, more room within each of the provinces, including Québec, with respect to the orientation of manpower development programs, which wishes greater control... The control is even so strong, at any rate according to what I read in the commission's document, that they even want to evaluate the effectiveness of Québec educational institutions. I find that - we all find that - totally inadmissible, it goes without saying, as well as, I would say, the local ramifications which the federal government might wish to introduce, for us, at this time, to once again duplicate structures already existing in Québec.

Perhaps just a last small comment on the urgency we mentioned just now. It is clear that at present we have a number of sectors of economic activity which have a shortage of manpower. And we might wonder how it is that we have so many sectors with a shortage of manpower when the unemployment rate is so high in Québec. This is a matter of great concern for us. We tell ourselves that, in a period of recession like the present, it is even more urgent to find a remedy to this situation. When we see for example businesses which tell us: "But it doesn't make sense! I can't find adequate resources and skills for my business. I have to bring in immigrants to carry out the work." This situation, we are told, doesn't make much sense and the urgency we are speaking of is more at this level as well.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Madam, this ends this set of questions, but we will probably have time after the other series to have a second round, since there were no requests from the other members. We now turn to the other side of the table, to Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for coming to appear before us. Thank you for your brief. I would like to congratulate you on the work you are doing. I know that you are doing work which is much appreciated in all areas affected by it. You are working in close cooperation with my colleague, the Minister of Manpower and Income Security, Mr. Bourbeau. You say moreover in your conclusion on page 9 of your brief, you are right to say that the Québec government has adopted clear orientations with respect to manpower adjustment, stressing partnership and the regionalization of responsibilities.

I refer to the statements of my colleague, Mr. Bourbeau, who recently called for, who asked the federal government for this exclusivity of jurisdiction which is so absolutely essential to us. There is nothing new in this. We have been asking for it for 30 years. I believe that we have here a particularly eloquent example of the type of federalism we have gotten into and

which doesn't work any more. Because if there is any area where the federal government had no business being, it is this area, education being a provincial responsibility. But we have suddenly found ourselves with a federal presence in this jurisdiction even though all those working in the sector told them to go away. You have no business here; we are in a better position than you to solve our manpower training problems. And then, all this time, they remain there. Duplication, loss of effectiveness, waste of money. And you bring us a brief which is particularly eloquent in this respect.  
(8:30 p.m.)

We could say the same thing in many other sectors, because the tactics which we see in this field, on the part of the federal government, are the same as those we see in other areas. They have a primary jurisdiction, whether it be in aeronautics for example or in interprovincial or international trade, to refer to an example which we are presently confronted with in the sphere of energy. On the basis of that, there arises a set of additional or implicit jurisdictions so that finally, there is not a single exclusive jurisdiction in the Canadian federation. The lists in sections 91 and 92, which the Fathers of Confederation made in their great wisdom in 1967, said: The provinces are closer to social, political, economic realities and they know these problems particularly well, so we'll give them the opportunity to deal with them. Since they know the problems, they are better able to provide solutions. But in practice we have seen these provincial fields invaded by the federal power and even given a federal preponderance in many cases. And here, we see one of these cases with unemployment insurance, as in other areas of activities. We find ourselves with a federal government which invades a field of strictly provincial jurisdiction which is so important for us.

In recommendation 4, on page 4, you recommend: "That the Québec government regionalize the decision-making process in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the human and financial resources which it devotes to developing the economy." I find this recommendation particularly interesting. There is another aspect here when we speak of manpower, when we speak of Québec's need to have complete jurisdiction over manpower training. There is a very interesting dimension here because of the regional aspect, that we can also decentralize because, what Ottawa is guilty of, Québec should not be guilty of as well. We also must be aware of the need for us in turn to regionalize our action, in particular with respect to manpower. With respect to this regionalization of manpower training, would you have precise regionalization plans? And will you be able to provide examples in these fields where federal policies prevent you from acting as you would

like to?

**Mrs. Boily:** Well, first of all, I would like to say that I am very happy to hear you say that indeed as a provincial government, you are concerned not to repeat the main orientation which the federal authority, for example, may have in its policies at present and that you are also concerned, as Québec government, with possibly regionalizing all, I would say, the manpower objectives and actions. And for us, it is clear that this aspect is very important. I am going to leave to my colleague, Mr. Laflamme, the task of developing this a bit more concretely.

**Mr. Laflamme:** Mr. Rémillard, if we look at the latest moves, I should say, of job planning at the federal level, we see that the employment commission is to define programs, objectives, and orientations on a national basis. It is certain that there is not just one single labour market in Canada, there are several. And even within our province, there are also several again. It is in this sense that we say that the criteria attached to the programs should come from the region. You know how local development, that is, originating in the region, can be effective. You also know that in business when we want efficiency and effectiveness to be given greater priority, we ensure that the decision-making centres are as low as possible in the organization, even beginning with the worker who decides what he is to do. It is in this sense that we say that, at the regional level, the vocational training commissions are really parity organizations, but also regional organizations. With their experience, I think in any case they are able to act in this sense. And we are happy also that you can be so familiar with the climate in which we have to operationalize the various provincial and federal programs. Perhaps Yvan had other...

**Mr. Aubre:** More precisely, let us imagine the following scenario: a small business modernizes and decides to proceed to the stage of training its own manpower, while continuing its operations in part, and so they ask to take advantage of government programs. They suddenly find themselves, at that time, with a wide range of programs which, in great part, seek completely different objectives, which have different standards, and which, often, are attached to shortage lists which themselves are different from the federal and the province. And the employer wants an integrated plan; when will training take place? Who will be on training? Do you guarantee the commitments? etc. It is nearly impossible to carry out this type of activity in a small business. There are too many people involved for any one to be able to make commitments and, in great part, we have

difficulties in arriving at any conclusion, because, for the client, for the business and its labour force, the objective is that by a certain morning the labour force will be competent, efficient and effective on the new equipment. In addition to that, there are all the suppliers of services, those who will do the training, who also have their own constraints. There are many people involved, and it seems to us that there is housecleaning to do here, beginning, I think, by clarifying objectives, orientations, shortages, that is, beginning by having a single manager at the political level and, what we say is that Québec should be the single manager in the area of manpower. We will at least have eliminated a great many of the irritants in the present system.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Maciocia.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, I think that everything has been said. I also congratulate you on your brief. I would have only one remark to make. You are the second organization today which has told us that it is necessary to repatriate powers from the federal government, but it seems to me that the Québec government would only be playing a temporary role, because, to say as you do in recommendation No. 4, that the Québec government should regionalize the decision-making process, and all that, could I understand the reasons? Because I have the clear impression that the Québec government is there only as a transition between the federal government and the regions. Could you comment on this matter?

**Mr. Aubre:** When we speak of manpower training, well, I will not speak of so-called basic education, which is more for young people in the Education and Higher Education systems. But when we have people who are employed or looking for work, the problem is very different. We must be prepared, the decision-making levels must be lowered, nearer to those concerned. If we look at the businesses which are doing well today, they are those where hierarchical levels are being compressed, businesses where the employee on the firing line is more and more master of decision-making in his area of competence. He is made responsible. And in manpower training, it will be necessary, if we want it to work, to bring decisions down to the regional level so that very little time is lost between identifying the problem and responding to it. This is our idea of regionalizing, of lowering the decision-making centres to have the real flavour. We estimate the needs, and we know them. And we control a good part of the responses. But, at present, we do not control them sufficiently to be as effective as we could be.

**Mr. Laflamme:** I think, Mr. Maciocia, that what we wish for is to adapt the programs, the manpower development measures, to regional realities. We state this clearly on page 6 of our brief. It is in this sense that we wish for greater flexibility and greater adaptability in programs so that the regions themselves can benefit.

It is useless to create training programs for income security beneficiaries if there are not many in a region. It is useless to give \$ 500 000 to a region when the unemployment rate is almost 5 % or 6 %. It is in this sense that we wish to adapt the measures to the regions and leave them manoeuvring room in terms of global development. For example, if a region, its budget is of the order of \$ 1 million or \$ 2 million, that it may be capable of adapting to the real needs of the market economy, of their clients.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Guy Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** In the same vein as what Mr. Maciocia has just asked, if I understand your brief, the meaning is to prune the decision tree, to remove anything which pollutes, which interferes, which encumbers and complicates, and go directly to where the action is, that is in your case, you say, the regions. It is not just to decentralize with respect to federalism, but it is also with respect to provincialism, to a certain point.

**Mr. Laflamme:** Exactly.

**A voice:** That's surely right.

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

**Mrs. Hovington:** All right. That was the point which I wanted to make also because we have heard today about the regional cooperation and development organization, which mentioned also, which let it be seen or recognized at any rate that the transfer of certain powers from the federal level, they wanted it specifically for the regions. This leads to my remark this afternoon. I said that, basically, it is almost a confederation which you want, with a Québec government and region authorities sovereign in exercising certain powers, in certain jurisdictions, of power. I think that you go also in this direction with your regionalization, your decision-making in the regions.

**Mr. Laflamme:** Yes. Program modulation.

**Mrs. Boily:** What is also mentioned is that when we talk of manpower policy, we are actually saying that the main lines must be worked out with the partners and that these main lines must then be quickly brought down to the level of the regions and applied directly. This is the way to...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We have now completed this set of questions. We still had time for questions from the members in general. Mr. Proulx would like to use up his time, and Mr. d'Anjou is next. Then, we will come back to Mrs. Marois and to Mr. Chevette, who had asked for additional questions if there was time. Now, Mr. Proulx, it's your turn, you may use up your time.

**Mr. Proulx:** Two brief questions, Mr. Chairman. The first, is... two points of information. The content of the programs, all the contents of the programs, will they all go through your office?

**Mr. Laflamme:** Unfortunately no. The content of the programs in the regular system is developed by the school board, the public school institutions. Of course, it would be better to have more cooperation and coordination through consultation with all partners in an effort to adapt existing programs to technological change in the labour market.

**Mr. Proulx:** And is, with the... I am a novice in all this, but, with the current changes to unemployment insurance, with... We know that more and more companies, relatively big companies can define their own. Do they have to go through you or can they do business directly? Is there any risk here? We know that there are some new methods which are applicable, particularly with the big companies. (8:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Aubre:** From the moment the client, the company, pays and the money comes from its own pocket, I think it becomes an open competition; the company can deal with whomever it chooses.

**Mr. Proulx:** Yes. This, I do not think we will dwell on that for too long.

**Mr. Aubre:** When a company wants to use government measures, it has to go through some sort of administrative machinery. In many cases, it goes through us, but I would not say exclusively through us. For example, one could take advantage of certain programs offered by colleges and school boards, without going through us, because these are financed with funds from those government departments.

**Mr. Proulx:** But the company must go

through some institution, yours or some other, of course it cannot do business directly...

**Mr. Aubre:** It cannot do business directly if it is...

**Mr. Proulx:** ...that means that the company will look for money elsewhere.

**Mr. Aubre:** No. If it means using, quote, unquote, government funds somewhere, there must be some control.

**Mr. Proulx:** O.K. The other brief question I have. A few minutes ago, you said that the training criteria are defined nationally. I would like to hear from you, since you are in the best position to provide us with answers, which regions have most benefited from these criteria to date? The criteria are set out by the federal government; they come from the federal government. Can you tell me which region of the country has benefited the most from them?

**Mr. Laflamme:** I would not be in a position to say that British Columbia, Ontario or Newfoundland have benefited the most from the criteria. I think no one knows the answer yet. The overall measures have not been evaluated across Canada. I think the measures have been studied here in Québec and I want to say where the shoe pinches, where it has not gone right. It is in this sense that we have said, that we have pointed out that in the current climate, it is not always easy.

**Mr. Proulx:** They did not favour Québec.

**Mr. Laflamme:** They did not favour Québec at all times.

**Mr. Proulx:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. d'Anjou.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Mr. Chairman, I find what we have just heard about the regionalization of the implementation of certain policies very interesting. I think no one is questioning the fact that the central authority, the government, should retain responsibility for allocating budgets and setting major objectives, and you seem to agree with that, but at the local level, there must be some leeway with respect to decision-making, so that specific needs could be met rapidly, and customized training, industrial training, etc., could be provided immediately. I am pleased to hear that, since it confirms our point of view. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Laflamme:** Just to answer Mr. d'Anjou.

I think you very well realize, we all know, that Québec is based on entrepreneurship and dynamism, but I think it is time to move from words to action in that direction.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** On that, Mrs. Marois, I think we will start again with a round of rapid questions, from words to action.

**Mrs. Marois:** Yes. I will be very quick and this is more of a comment, because, for two years, I had the opportunity to work with vocational training commissions. As Minister of Manpower and Income Security, I saw no improvement in this quagmire. I took part in interminable discussions. I did not get any more answers than the current government. I resisted the encroachment of the federal government with few resources and in particular without the resources that the cooperation among partners is currently offering us. At the present time, the risk of not resolving this problem is enormous for Québec, because it means lagging behind in what is most fundamental for any western society wishing to take part in the globalization of markets, the skills and excellence of its labour force.

My question is for the Commission members. In spite of everything we have heard from the representatives of the vocational training commissions, in spite of the consensus now in Québec, in spite of the fact that the government has not asked for repatriation of vocational training in its most recent demands, what shall we do, given the procedures by which the powers may be obtained, to obtain the powers, if we have a consensus and yet we cannot work through the system?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You don't expect an immediate answer, of course.

**Mrs. Marois:** No, Mr. Chairman.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** But the question has at least been noted by the Commission. Mr. Chevette, did you have a question or a comment?

**Mr. Chevette:** I have been holding back for a while, but I would also like to yield to the temptation. Mr. Chairman, I am both surprised and pleased by the warmth with which the minister has acknowledged the urgency to act, especially the need to act. However, I am doubly surprised to find that it was not even part of the minimum demands, yet those demands, I remember the repeated demands all week long of my colleague from Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, to include this sector, which is indispensable for

the development of our Québec society, and they never agreed to include it in the demands that were taken to Meech Lake. Therefore, you can see that we can be enthusiastic about pointing this out, but we could have been more enthusiastic at the right moment, when Québec had a certain position of strength because English Canada wanted to reintegrate us into the Constitution. We were in a certain position of strength. As small as it was, we did not know how to take advantage of it. And this, I very frankly assure you that it may be all right to go about saying things here and there but we should at least talk face-to-face from time to time. Not just saying any old thing, at any time, for any reason. But we are currently still subject to clause 7-50 or unanimity, depending on the subjects. Basically, do you see any value in negotiating under clause 7-50, at least, under the current formula in order to get what we urgently need?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Is the question addressed to the witnesses or the minister, Mr. Chevette?

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

**A voice:** To the minister.

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

**Mr. Chevette:** Mr. Bélanger, I will answer that by saying that what I need is a real answer.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** So the question is for the minister.

**A voice:** Ho, ho!

**Mr. Laflamme:** He wants a real answer.

**Mrs. Marois:** His assessment is not the same as yours!

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

**Mr. Chevette:** You must have noticed that our assessments are very different.

**A voice:** Very different.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I give the witnesses the floor first. The minister may come back later. Here, I think it is appropriate for the Association members to give the answers they want first.

**Mrs. Boily:** Well, then, Mr. Chevette, indeed I think your question is very pertinent. I

think that if on the one hand we have taken the trouble to write a brief in the first place, if we have taken the trouble to come and appear before you here this evening, it is because we truly believe that our main recommendation of repatriation is possible. First, if we did not believe it, you may rest assured that it would not have appeared in our brief. Second, it was said a while ago that the aspect of negotiations as such had failed in advance, if we may say so, or at least that it did not produce the results the government had expected. But I think, seeing all the people here this evening, you are all people of action, people who have your beliefs just as we do, we also have our beliefs. And one of our beliefs is that, among other things, I would definitely say, even if there have been failures in previous negotiations, with the power that you all have here today since you all agree, I think it worthwhile to return to the negotiating table.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I will now give Mr. Rémillard the floor also for a second quick round.

**A voice:** Ha, ha! Ha, ha!

**Mr. Rémillard:** Well, that is a real answer. I wish to emphasize this because it is an answer which refers to probably the primary reality we are dealing with: the political strength which we can build here together. It is obviously not easy to face these situations and we can mention others. However, the fact remains that you are perfectly right to say that what will make a difference is the political strength that we are going to be able to build and what we can do here together so that at a given time, we can say, "That's enough, it's over, this is what we demand". And until now we have probably never had such a consensus at this level. And this is why I very much appreciated your comments because your area is clearly a perfect example of the current consensus and cooperation and the desire that we all have to say, "That's enough, it's over". And in this respect your answer to Mr. Chevette is a real answer and I thank you!

**Mr. Chevette:** I had asked for it too.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Yes.

**Mr. Laflamme:** Mr. Bélanger, a supplementary, as some colleagues would say.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We are not following the same rules here, but go on.

**Mr. Laflamme:** I think that when six people agree that we need a manpower development policy in Québec, it is because we want more than just a political will. We want our partners

to be concretely involved. I think it is time for a vision of the future regarding our primary capital, our labour force, human capital, if we want to ensure good economic development. We are all involved in this, I think we need to ensure our primary resource, the human resource. It is in this sense that this point can never be overemphasized, in my opinion.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We still have a few minutes left, so I think Mr. Béland had asked... No? Mr. Larose had, well, Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Larose:** I do not claim to be a politician, but really, if the mere fact of having a consensus among the partners could put an end to an 80-year-old dispute, I admit that once the people of Québec have made a decision on their own future, imagine the result! I appreciate the answer of our friends in the organization, but at the same time, it clearly states the how, for our own commission, in relation to the entire subject. In this light, yes, it is a question of a position of strength, to be built up and used.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I presume you are not looking for precise answers at this moment, Mr. Larose?

**Mr. Larose:** No, this is not a question. We are involved in a continuum, we are together for several months. Each one is contributing his part.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Well, we have, for all practical purposes, almost used up all our time, except for the Chairman, who is becoming less articulate as the day grows old; it only remains for us to thank you for this extremely interesting presentation, which has brought us various views on one aspect of the very broad question we are examining. I thank you, in the name of all the members, for your presence here this evening, for your presentation and the very detailed answers you have given our questions.

I would now request that you leave the room, because your seats are going to be taken over by another group in a few minutes.  
(9:00 p.m.)

Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, will you please come back to your seats so that we can hear the group before us.

We shall now hear from the Ligue d'Action nationale. Mr. Morin will give the presentation, after first introducing the members of his group. I would like to remind you that you have ten minutes to present your brief, which has already been received and read by the Commission members. I would also like to inform you that, following your presentation, the question period



will be divided into 10 minutes for the government group, 10 minutes for the opposition group, 25 minutes for registered members and 5 minutes for the Chair, if there is still time. The Chair's time is usually taken up by others, but we won't mention that here.

So, Mr. Morin, would you please begin by introducing those with you, who need no introduction, of course, but we must go through with the formalities, and then present your report.

#### Ligue d'Action nationale

**Mr. Morin (Rosaire):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my far right, Mrs. Hélène Pelletier Baillargeon; on my left, Mr. François-Albert Angers, economist; and on my immediate right, Mr. Jean-Marc Léger.

Secondly, Mr. Chairman, I shall be very brief, almost telegraphic. I congratulate you on the courage you have shown in agreeing to spend five months reflecting on the future of Québec and listening to what Quebecers have to say. I am almost tempted to offer my sympathies for the immense task you have willingly assumed.

Thirdly, Mr. Chairman, our brief has been ready since March 13, 1912, the day of our founding.

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

**Mr. Morin:** For at least 50 years, the Ligue has believed and hoped that Canada would become a real homeland for Quebecers. We have been involved in practically every national struggle. We have fought against all federal government centralization plans. We have also been active in a positive way within this country. But after some 60 years of sterile, futile struggling, we have lost confidence. Recent events have changed the way we think rather quickly. The 1982 reforms, imposed without our consent, and the failure of Meech Lake demonstrate irreversibly that we can no longer hope for changes to the power-sharing arrangement. Throughout at least the last 50 years, the demands of every successive Québec government have fallen on deaf ears. And now we can no longer hope for change. Section 41 of the Constitution Act imposed in 1982 requires unanimous consent for institutional reform; after the compromises made with regard to Meech Lake, a triple-E Senate, etc., we know that unanimous consent for the reform of federal institutions is impossible. Once the minimum is refused, we cannot expect the maximum.

Section 38 allows English Canada - seven provinces representing 50 % of the population - to impose on us, as it did in 1982, a change we do not accept. It is clear to us that within this federation, in which we live under the yoke, it is impossible for Québec to obtain

the changes it needs.

I would make one last point, about the Francophone minority we represent. In 1987, there were 75 Québec MPs out of 194 in this Confederation. Today, we have 75 out of 245. We have dropped from 33 % to 25 %, and what with the population decline in Québec on the one hand, and the massive influx of immigrants into other provinces on the other, we will fall within five or ten years to perhaps 21 % or 22 %. In such a situation, it will be impossible for us to get any more than we got on June 23.

I would now like to introduce Jean-Marc Léger, who will present our brief.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Léger.

**Mr. Léger (Jean-Marc):** Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, if there were a Guinness book of records for national performance, Québec - and Canada along with it - would undoubtedly take first place for the length and magnitude of constitutional debates. Reports from meetings of government ministers, innumerable First Ministers' conferences, innumerable Royal Commissions, not to mention the records of hundreds of conferences, round-table discussions and other seminars form a kind of gigantic motherlode whose strata repeat themselves one after the other with an overwhelming eloquence, and also a feeling of sorry impotence. Sisyphus himself must be watching us in stupefied admiration.

Today, we face the same fundamental question. Despite four or five decades of commissions, research and studies, we are facing the same fundamental question and grappling with essentially the same problems, except that they are even worse now, and the situation has become more critical, more urgent, and the debate more painful.

What newfound virtue or unlikely fountain of youth could make it possible to bring major, rapid change to a petrified regime that only recently has shown itself to be powerless to support even minor modifications.

We believe that to dream, even today and with the greatest good faith, of a fundamental renewal of Canadian federalism, calls for either the Coué method, or some kind of aggressive therapy practised on a terminally ill patient.

The essential issue for us is that of the future of a culture, meaning the survival of our people in the face of the formidable danger that the goodness of uniformity represents for all cultures and all national peoples. Every people has a primordial duty to affirm and assert its own culture, thereby contributing to the preservation of cultural diversity, a primary condition for the freedom of all peoples and individuals.

You have no doubt noted that our brief

focuses on three themes: (1) the impossibility of federalism in Canada, because of the inherent contradiction in terms, and because of contemporary technological, sociopolitical and economic developments; (2) the need for independence as the only possible way for Québec to survive and flourish, and, no less important, as the only effective formula for establishing a fruitful partnership with Canada; (3) the urgent need for action, for time is short and every year lost can only increase the instability and discontent that are so detrimental to all concerned, with regard to economics, politics and international relations. The impossibility of federalism. There is no need to remind you that we're talking about a hybrid, a system that can't decide between a unitary formula and true federalism, tainted from the start by two basic flaws. First, the disagreement between the two founding peoples on how to interpret the 1867 agreement. And the second, even more serious one, the fact that this system does not recognize, either in its structures or its institutions, the fundamental sociocultural reality of the two founding peoples; for we all know the Constitution recognizes only the provinces, among which we were once one of four, and are now one of ten.

For about half a century, the system has been dominated by an apparently irrepressible movement towards centralization, on the one hand, and on the other, by repeated crises in which the aspirations of Québec and Canada have proven irreconcilable. The federal government has progressively encroached on areas exclusively or primarily under provincial jurisdiction: social policy, cultural affairs, linguistic policy, even education, higher education, manpower training, scientific research, more recently literacy, etc. Under the pretext of helping provinces assume their obligations, federal authorities tend to set so-called national standards and establish joint plans that in fact end up transforming broad sectors of provincial jurisdiction into immense grey areas. In industrialized societies, we are witnessing a growing interdependence between the major spheres of human activity. This tangible development in Canada, as elsewhere, will make the practice of federalism increasingly difficult, and ultimately impossible.

Finally, the evolution of international relations and their extension into such main areas of activity as culture, all levels of education, work, social security, health, etc., leads to a multiplication of bilateral treaties and international agreements in those fields. Inasmuch as the central government, in the name of a single foreign policy, intends to maintain exclusive control over the negotiation and implementation of such treaties and agreements, even in these areas, provincial autonomy is bound to be increasingly weakened, emptied of part of its contents. In order to ensure its basic

security – cultural and political, as well as economic – in other words, to ensure its survival, Québec has an absolute need to exercise the full powers it would have with national sovereignty. Every normally constituted people chooses its constitutional status and models its institutions in accordance with two fundamental, permanent concerns: to preserve and strengthen its basic values and, above all, its culture; and to seek the optimal rate of development to ensure economic growth and social progress. Modern social development is an integrated process. It cannot be parcelled out or governed simultaneously by different authorities. This development cannot be dispersed among multiple and competing powers. The development of a modern society depends primarily on human resources, from the point of view of number, quality and identity. With regard to number, this means that a State must have control over its population, in particular, control of immigration policy.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Léger, we are running a little overtime. If you could please sum up more quickly. In any case, the members have read the brief and the discussion will naturally allow us to examine it further. But please...

**Mr. Léger:** All right, Mr. Chairman, I will...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ...take a few moments to conclude.  
(9:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Léger:** ...of course, there is also quality, which presumes a strategy for human resource development that encompasses education in its broadest sense, social policy, health and cultural activity.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, we believe that the people of Québec no longer have the remotest chance of fulfillment or even survival, within the present system. We are convinced that national independence is their only salvation, the only option that allows efficiency and dignity to be reconciled, and the only one that preserves the possibility of friendly, fruitful cooperation with Canada. We believe, ultimately, that we must hurry and not overly extend this long period of probation on the threshold of history. It would be unworthy of both Canada and ourselves to force us to pursue a sterile debate that creates such insecurity on so many levels. It is high time we took our place among normal peoples. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Léger. We'll begin with questions from Commission members, five minutes for each member, including questions and answers. First on the list is Mr. André Ouellet.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Allow me to make a few comments, Mr. Chairman, and I'll finish with a short question.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Fine.

**Mr. Ouellet:** I have listened to you very carefully, and I must say you have presented a most pessimistic position. Obviously, I do not share your views, which seem very black to me. In my opinion, you describe a situation that is miserable, terrible, even frightening, and I don't know, nor do I really understand, what you are describing. As far as I'm concerned, your description is not at all that of Québec. You have told us about some very dark clouds on the economic, cultural and international horizon. I believe that over the years, Québec, within Canada, has made extraordinary progress in those three areas. I don't have to remind you of its exceptional economic success, its recovery in many ways, and of the people here, around the table, who have made distinct contributions with regard to the economy, and Québec's considerable progress. As for culture, there is no doubt that our artists, our writers and our composers occupy a position of importance not only in Québec and Canada, but also on the international scene, which clearly goes beyond an exclusive Québec context. And all of this has happened within a Canadian framework. With regard to the international scene, it seems obvious to me that the Francophone summits have eloquently demonstrated what Québec can and must do. Mr. Bouchard, who is with us not as a proponent of sovereignty, but as a Canadian cabinet minister, has contributed, by working with the Québec and Canadian Governments, to ensuring a front-row seat for Québec in the international arena.

I therefore have a question for you. I understand that you would undoubtedly like Québec to have more power. I think you are ultimately talking about a kind of sovereignty. But you say that your first brief dates back to... that it might have been written in 1912, because at that time, in 1912, you wanted to be sure that the language and culture would be protected. Here we are in 1990, and I find that the French language and culture, in Québec, in any case, are very strong and very much alive. Do you not think, finally, that perhaps the Canadian context is not quite as black as you seem to want to paint it?

**Mr. Morin:** If you read *Action nationale*, Mr. Ouellet, you would see that we constantly rejoice in all achievements by Francophones and by Quebecers, and we note them in every field, economic, cultural and social. But it's not because of federalism that such progress has been achieved, it was by the sweat of our brow, and despite federalism. If you want to talk about

federalism, Mr. Ouellet, look at what has happened to our minorities outside Québec, from Newfoundland to the Rockies, 70 % assimilated, on average, except Acadia.

If you look at Québec-Ottawa relations, you'll see 100 encroachments on exclusively provincial areas of jurisdiction; you know that, I don't have to name them for you. If you're in doubt, I'll send you the list.

In constitutional negotiations over the past 45 years, it has been shown that we could not obtain the power-sharing that Lesage, Johnson, Bourassa and Lévesque asked for. Each time, we got "no" for an answer. We are a political minority in Canada and, as long as we remain one, the treatment we have received in the past will continue to be served up in the future. Mr. Léger or Mrs. Hélène Pelletier Baillargeon may add to that.

**Mr. Léger:** I would add, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Commissioner, that the results which you applaud with us are above all due to the awakening of the Québec people and their increased awareness. It was not thanks to the solicitude of the central government. Secondly, it would be impossible to count the number of times the central authorities have intervened and intruded in areas of Québec jurisdiction, in particular education, to name but one.

A few years ago, we tried to take inventory. We found 42 federal programs in scientific research, manpower training, youth assistance, etc., showing to what extent, even on that level, we were dependent on the central government. More than one-quarter of budget of the ministère de l'Éducation must be negotiated each year in light of so-called joint projects, because Québec has neither the means nor the resources to meet its own obligations. Lastly, I might add, since you brought up the 11th international lobby, that there, too, we always go through infinitely difficult bursts of negotiation, only to obtain a fold-down seat, never mind an armchair, at certain uniquely Francophone institutions; such compromises are always fragile and questionable.

**Mrs. Pelletier Baillargeon (Hélène):** Mr. Ouellet, I would cite the example of the Charter of the French language, which is surely one of the laws that has enjoyed the greatest public consensus in Québec. It is a law to which all Quebecers have shown their allegiance. But when this law was drafted, had it not been done in a spirit of public will, had it been drafted by consulting the legal experts, it would never have had the scope that it did in its final wording. This had to be done in spite of the federal context and the future showed that big chunks of the law were cut out, which negatively affect its current effectiveness, through the court decisions that, one after the other, in a

thoroughly systematic way, have found Québec in the wrong, because of the appeals launched against the law by the Anglophone minority in Québec.

Because of our federal connection, we are constantly forced to swim upstream, culturally speaking, because it has been proved that the policy of institutional bilingualism means an open door to assimilation; the rates quoted to us each year with tears and regrets by Canada's Commissioner of Official Languages show that we're in the anteroom of assimilation. In Québec, in order to have control over our linguistic and cultural policy, we absolutely need exclusive powers, over both language and immigration.

Another recent example...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I must interrupt you, otherwise there will be no time for the answers to the next questions. Mr. Lucien Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for the magnificent brief you have presented. I'd like to raise a question that troubles me greatly. It's this prejudice we see reappearing more and more frequently, now, implying that a sovereign Québec would tend to be intolerant, and show a lack of respect for democratic rights. Again, last weekend, I read a *La Presse* editorial referring to the fact that the idea that Québec might achieve sovereignty raises deep apprehension in some circles, as regards Québec's capacity to fulfil its democratic duties once left to its own devices.

This is one of the things that bothers me most, and I ask myself what we can do to dispel such a misconception, to defuse this false and, I think, terribly unjust concern being pinned on sovereignty.

We know, in fact, that such criticism and apprehensions are, in general, drummed up by federalists, by people who come from a system with its own injustices - as we have been reminded today - perpetrated against Japanese Canadians, Italians and Chinese; a system that not long ago, in the very recent past, put hundreds of Quebecers in jail without charging them, without a mandate, and without apology, either. A system that, in 1982, adopted a Charter of Rights, the consecrating act of a democracy. A Charter of Rights was created, all right, but thanks to an essentially antidemocratic law, one that was imposed on Quebecers despite them, despite an almost unanimous vote in the National Assembly. A system embodied by a government that, today, this week, refuses to formally recognize Québec's right to self-determination, which is the very foundation of democracy.

When you know that accusations of antidemocratic attitudes in Québec come from this kind of background, from these people, you ask yourself questions and you say: What can we

Quebecers do to wipe out such a prejudice? We've only barely gotten rid of the prejudice that says we're people without public ethics, while, in fact, since the election of a pro-sovereignty government, institutions have been created and a mentality has been implanted in Québec, for good, I hope; one which prevails even in the current government, giving it the honour of being the most honest government in the country for close to 20 years, 15 years, now. What can we do? What can we Quebecers do, to convince ourselves, first of all, for there are those among us who convey such beliefs, and to convince our Anglophone friends in Canada, who believe such things unquestioningly, and also to convince people throughout the world, on the international scene, who were shocked by the events at Oka? What can we Quebecers do about it?

**Mr. Morin:** We do not share your concern. Québec is the most tolerant society, compared to others.

**Mr. Bouchard:** But listen to me. Listen to me, Mr. Chairman. I must interrupt you right away. You're going to say that I share those apprehensions...

**Mr. Morin:** No, no.

**Mr. Bouchard:** ...I do not share them, but what can we do to dispel the ghosts?

**Mr. Morin:** Look at the way a tolerant Québec society has treated its English minority and compare it to what English Canada has done and still does in the other provinces, with regard to our French groups and their school rights. There's a first answer.

Secondly, you can take this very tolerant, fraternal society, where we consider our internal minorities to be equal partners, full-fledged Quebecers with their school privileges; compare what goes on here to what goes on in all the other provinces, even including Acadia.

In our demand for independence, we have not... This is not hard-line; it is normal and necessary. We are nowhere near conceiving of a Great Wall of China on the banks of the Ottawa, or a Berlin Wall on the New Brunswick border.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Richard Holden.

**Mr. Holden:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Morin, your Ligue has been in existence since 1912; I don't know what "Action nationale" meant in 1912, but today, when I look at the list of members - I even see the name of my good friend, Philippe Gélinas, with whom I was active in the Conservative Party, a man who, even 25 years ago, described himself as an advanced

autonomist - I see a long list of eminent Quebecers, but I see no Anglophones and no members of other language groups. I see nothing in your list of members - this may not be a list of all your members - but I see nothing to indicate that, aside from "Quebecers whose roots go deep" the nation includes that 20 % of the population who are not from the oldest lines. (9:30 p.m.)

You may tell me I'm paranoid, but when I see that, I worry. Indeed, I see in your brief that the British North America Act is a compromise in which there has been a historic misunderstanding between the idea of the pact and that of a unitary government. I recall being at the Université de Montréal with my friend Mr. Béland and Judge Bissonnette was teaching us constitutional law. He said: Yes, Mr. Holden, we study the idea of the pact because it's crucial to our national survival. But the following year, I went to McGill and professor Scott told me: No, no, the American Civil War and the desire to build a railway across Canada were the reasons the British North America Act compromise was made. So it's true, there was a historic misunderstanding in the creation of our country.

**A voice:** There was disinformation.

**A voice:** He should have stayed at the Université de Montréal.

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

**Mr. Holden:** But I live with the two historic understandings of our problem. But I would ask you, Mr. Morin, what your concept of the word "national" is. You speak at length about identity in your brief. You speak of the people. Mr. Léger mentioned the Québec people. The Anglophone and other minorities, that 20 % who are here and have built their own institutions themselves, are they nothing? Nobody gave us our institutions. We built them ourselves with our skills and our energy. Are we part of your nation? Could we become members of the Ligue d'action nationale?

**Mr. Morin:** All Quebecers, be they Jews, Greeks, Italians or Anglophones, are Quebecers. We recognize them, as I said just before, as full partners in Québec. You are surprised that there are no Anglophones among our members. Among our supporters, if you look at that list, there are some twenty Anglophone supporting members and other cultural communities. I should send you a copy. Mr. Léger will answer you more seriously.

**Mr. Léger:** Mr. Commissioner, I would like to add a few comments, in particular the following: I believe it is difficult to deny that

Québec is the state which, to this day, has most liberally welcomed the diverse communities that, over time, have come here as immigrants; I'm talking about both actual welcome and social policy, obtaining social benefits. This is the province - I put that in quotation marks, for I detest the term - the province that has guaranteed the most favourable treatment for its cultural minorities. I would also note that in all the efforts to open Québec to the world, as we've been saying for the past 30 years, even though it is often forgotten that it did happen in the past, in the last century, in all these efforts to open up, you'll notice that among those who fought the most for that cause, on every level, you'll find Québec nationalists, in particular, whether they took action through journalism, various organizations, etc. Lastly, I would point out that many organizations were created by Québec nationalists specifically in order to encourage fraternal dialogue with our brothers of various origins. Offhand, I can recall the creation a number of years ago of Les Amitiés Québec/Proche-Orient, another group called Les Amitiés Québec-Néo-Québécois, etc. On this point, Mr. Commissioner, we can not be accused of bad faith.

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

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I find all the questions raised this evening most interesting, and I think answers and arguments such as yours will ultimately convince well-intentioned, intelligent people like, I am sure, our friends Mr. Ouellet and Mr. Holden; I am convinced of it.

Now, since it has come up, the title of your brief is normal and necessary independence. Mr. Ouellet said... You speak about sovereignty. At this point in the debate, we run the risk of arguing about semantics and losing sight of the real issues. Could you perhaps set things straight, if possible? Do the words sovereignty and independence mean the same thing to you? Are we talking about one and the same thing?

**Mr. Morin:** I know what's written. I'll let Mr. Léger explain.

**Mr. Léger:** I am very pleased, ladies and gentlemen, that this question has been raised, for, in effect, we have felt for some time now that there is grave danger of confusion, and it would be most serious if we were to arrive at a consensus, only to find it based on a misunderstanding. Indeed, to hear some people and groups speak, you sometimes get the impression that they are ready to support sovereignty, but not independence, as though they were two different states, different degrees, with sovereignty being less, quote,

extreme, unquote, than independence. In fact, independence and sovereignty are linked. National sovereignty is the legal expression of independence. I believe it is very important to emphasize that, and also that federalism can in no way be related to sovereignty. It may be a perfectly legitimate choice, but let us not try to camouflage it by calling it sovereignty and running the risk, once again, of creating confusion that can have serious consequences at this crucial time. We believe, then, that there is the status quo – in its real or watered-down version; or the many variations of federalism, which we believe can no longer be applied with any validity here; or lastly, national independence, which means sovereignty.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am honoured, Mr. Morin, to address your group. Mr. Angers, my colleague from Grasset, Jean-Marc, former president, my floor and hall-mate, Delmas Lévesque. I really feel like I'm in friendly company and want to stay there. I have three short questions.

In your document, it appears that sovereignty is the only solution for the survival and development of a modern society. My first question is: What is preventing us from being modern in the current situation? Is it an attitude, a perception? Is it a, quote, feeling, unquote (you know what my bias is)? Are there fundamental objections, as we might say, are there any major obstacles? Is the, quote, system, unquote, preventing us from being modern? As for myself, I feel almost modern, even though I'm old.

And now my second question. In his short presentation, Mr. Morin mentioned a Québec-Canada ratio regarding parliamentary representation. While the proportion of Québec MPs in Ottawa may be diminishing, at the same time, Québec seems to... In my opinion it doesn't seem, it is, it is becoming stronger and spreading its wings; it is leaving the nest for a little longer every day. If we were to plot a curve of these two parameters, would you say that we had arrived at a strategic point, or, as HEC economics and finance professors say, a dead stop, so that we have to make a move, turning performance curves into negative performance curves? In other words, is the couple no longer able to get along? That's my second question.

My third question regards your last paragraph. Is it an excessive need to be good, democratic, French-Canadian, in fact, to want to initiate the usual electoral process, with the addition of a referendum, a 3-year period, etc., etc. You understand the meaning of my third question... since you propose, for the purposes of achieving independence, a double voting

procedure, but you offer no say to your existing partner. It would be like the standard break-up of a couple that says, "I've had enough" and that's that. So you answer at the same time.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Hogue, you have practically used up all your question and answer time...

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ...but we have to grant time for a few answers.

**Mr. Morin:** I will respond to the first question and let Mr. Angers answer the other two, if you don't mind, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** It's difficult, but please be as clear as possible.

**Mr. Morin:** Mr. Hogue, when you speak of a modern Québec, I would make a comparison. If you were the president of, say, the People's Bank – I'm not talking about the caisses populaires – and the president of the Royal Bank intervened to alter decisions made by your Board of Directors, if the president of the Royal Bank intervened in your People's Bank to change your investment plans, if the president of the Royal Bank intervened to change your organization chart, could you achieve modernization? Could you develop normally? In a country like Québec, is it possible to have two or three authorities intervening in a diametrically opposed manner on various occasions? As for your example, that is, regarding whether we could agree on where we are and the democratic means for achieving independence, I leave the answer to the wisdom on my left.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Angers.

**Mr. Angers (François-Albert):** Mr. Chairman, Mr. Hogue has raised an interesting question. I believe that what has effectively happened is that, with Meech Lake and all the negotiations, we have reached the point where the curves have clearly met in such a way that Québec is increasingly paralysed; the curve representing centralization and the domination of Québec by English Canada is going to take off, while the Québec curve will drop. I think that image is perfect. And that's why, notwithstanding the principles stated by Mr. Léger, the brief, from a purely practical point of view, if Québec does not put itself in a sovereign position to negotiate whatever has to be negotiated with Canada, we will be locked into a framework from which we can never emerge. Because – listen to me, I'm betraying my 80 years – for 50 years I've been actively involved in this issue, fighting

with chambers of commerce, with people from the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society, against the federal government, trying to propose all kinds of satisfactory solutions, not for independence, at that time, but for autonomy, out of simple respect for the Constitution as established in 1867, and we were never able to get anything! Not only did we get nothing, we sank lower.

Whatever idea we had of the 1867 Constitution with exclusive powers for Québec, exclusive powers that in those areas, said the Privy Council, would make Québec as sovereign as the Parliament of Westminster itself; a Privy Council judgment, and all that was denied by the Supreme Court that... The federal government overran provincial powers. We don't talk about that any more; there are no more exclusive powers. It's the same right down the line. Consequently, it is clear that if the federal government is not faced by a sovereign authority, which states and emphasizes its sovereignty and wishes to negotiate one-on-one, we'll get no results, we'll have just the status quo, equivocations, negotiations that will last another 15, 20 or 30 years. When you think that those negotiations were begun more directly 45 years ago, 50 years ago, with the Sirois Report, and that here we are in the same place, 50 years later, not even in the same place, but worse off, that we're even forced to remain outside the Constitution - that's the situation of Québec today, because they tried to impose, we rejected... How can you believe that there will be...

(21:45 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Angers. Mr. Campeau will now ask a question on the Chair's time.

**Mr. Campeau:** I'm going to give you a chance to continue a bit, Mr. Angers. My question is this: If we assume, as your brief says, for it is clear on the subject, that independence is normal and necessary... Surely, no one will reproach you. We criticized people yesterday for not being precise enough. But I would ask you, which powers could we share with the central government?

**Mr. Angers:** Well! First of all, the central government would have to agree to share such powers. We would have to be independent and sovereign, in order to negotiate the kind of arrangement suitable for us. That's the current situation, from a practical point of view. Which is connected, by the way, to the third point, regarding whether, from a democratic standpoint, we are right to request elections and referendums only in Québec. As for that problem, whatever is going on in English Canada will be decided by them, it's their affair. It is obvious that, if we have a right to self-determination, if you recognize that Québec is a distinct entity

with a right to its culture and its government, then we are the ones who will organize our own referendum, our elections, for ourselves, in order to determine whether what we're proposing is accepted by the people, truly accepted by the people, democratically. Consequently, I repeat that Mr. Hogue's solution, the image he presents, is perfect: We are at a critical point. We need to know whether we really are liberating ourselves in order to be able to, either by ultimately negotiating certain problems with Ottawa... There will undoubtedly be some, although it will only be in order to achieve independence. There will be things to do, but we demand the powers, it is our choice, our freedom; then we'll decide what we can do, or what might be interesting for us to do, with Canada.

**Mr. Campeau:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Angers. We will now proceed with questions from the two parties; first for the governing party, Mrs. Bégin.

**Mrs. Bégin:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I'd like to thank you for coming here to present your brief. Upon reading it, one notes that you are demanding independence for Québec, purely and simply. In reply to Mr. Holden, who asked you before to define what you mean by the Québec people, you said that it meant the English, the Jews, that everyone was a Quebecer. Everyone who lives here, Anglophones, Jews, and other language groups. This morning, we heard from the Commission des droits de la personne, which presented its recommendation, should Québec become sovereign; naturally, they demanded that the constitution of a sovereign Québec include a charter of human rights. They also stipulated that such a charter contain clear, precise clauses pertaining to the fundamental language rights of the Francophone majority and of the Anglophone minority in Québec. In the case where our Québec charter of rights were included in the constitution, I would like to know which fundamental rights you would grant to the Anglophone and other minorities living in Québec?

**Mr. Morin:** Mrs. Pelletier Baillargeon will reply.

**Mrs. Pelletier Baillargeon:** Madam, I believe that the past speaks for the future. On the one hand, Québec was ruled for several years by an pro-independence government, and I believe one need only look at its track record with regard to the treatment of minorities to imagine how things would be in a sovereign Québec. Now, the Ligue has been in existence since 1913 and it is time to recognize that we have left behind the ethnocentric model of nationalism, that is, based

on ethnic origin, which used to be called race. In those days, French-Canadians were dispersed throughout Canada, the majority of them in communities that were still thriving, and it was possible to imagine that as the population grew and the birth rate rose, those communities would grow with them. The future proved us wrong. Québec nationalism is now territorial nationalism.

To be a Quebecer today is no longer a question of ethnic origin, it is a question of choice. A Quebecer is anyone who chooses to be one, who chooses Québec as his home and who chooses to share the culture of Québec, respecting, naturally, his own culture, if we're talking about ethnic groups who are invited to share our community life together in a spirit of cultural convergence and with the desire to build a common nation together. I believe there is often distrust, because an organization like the Ligue has been around for a long time and people are not aware of the changes Québec nationalism has undergone because of historical circumstances. I repeat, our position is as follows: Whosoever chooses to be a Quebecer shall be considered a Quebecer, a full-fledged citizen. Nobody is obliged to be a Quebecer, but all those who choose to be will be treated as equals. This has always been the Ligue's position.

**Mrs. Bégin:** That means you agree with the Commission des droits de la personne, which wants to include, to recognize language rights for the Anglophone minority...

**Mrs. Pelletier Baillargeon:** I think that...

**Mrs. Bégin:** ...This is what I understand from your answer.

**Mrs. Pelletier Baillargeon:** ...these rights already exist and there is nothing to indicate in any way that these rights will be jeopardized by Québec gaining sovereignty.

**Mr. Morin:** Education rights.

**Mrs. Bégin:** O.K. The second question is: Should Québec become independent, what kind of relations would you maintain with Franco-Ontarian communities, or perhaps the Acadians, and the like, following independence? Because yesterday, we heard from the Conseil de la vie française en Amérique, who told us: Whatever Québec's status, we ask that ties be maintained, that you don't leave us out in the cold. So I ask you, what kind of ties would you have with these French-Canadian minorities?

**Mrs. Pelletier Baillargeon:** I think that the stronger Québec is, linguistically and culturally, the more it can act as the hearth and home of French life in Canada, and the more able we will be to help minorities in their struggle for

survival. I think we are now living in an era of large-scale organizations, the French-speaking world is growing stronger, and I think that the more vibrant, productive and dynamic Québec is, the more positive the repercussions will be for our minorities. A Québec that is perpetually exhausted by its own internal problems can have no time or energy to spare for the French minorities outside Québec. In a situation where our own cultural security would be guaranteed by a Québec Constitution, I think we would have far more energy available to put into the fraternal relations you - and all of us - hope for.

**Mrs. Bégin:** Thank you, Madam. One last question, if you don't mind. Upon reading your brief, one can clearly see your position, that is, pro-independence. Whether or not federalism can work, you have arrived at the conclusion that we must proceed towards independence, that it's logical for a people to seek independence. I'd like to ask you, do you think it would be possible to have some intermediary form of association with the rest of Canada? I believe everyone here agrees that the status quo no longer has a *raison d'être*. But with the complete sovereignty you advocate, is there room for an association with Canada, either political or economic?

**Mrs. Pelletier Baillargeon:** Certainly, but I believe that first we must smash the 11-unit mould. Québec must force English Canada to come to it, not as 11 representatives, but as one single representative. And the only way to force English Canada to present itself to Québec as one bloc would be for us to become sovereign; for so long as we do not take the political initiative to act as a sovereign people, we will not be able to ask another people to meet with us as equals. We will always be relegated to the rank of province, a province with an increasingly minority status within Canada, more and more isolated within Canada - recent events have demonstrated this - a province with not much weight.

**Mrs. Bégin:** Thank you, Mrs. Baillargeon.

**Mr. Williams:** The Association...

**A voice:** Mr. Williams.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Perhaps we have time for a last question from Mr. Williams?

**Mrs. Bégin:** I yield the floor to Mr. Williams.

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



**Mr. Williams:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Morin, for being with us this evening. I would like to discuss the economic issue. Do you favour an economic association with Canada? The economic question is noticeably absent from your brief. Is it important to you? If you would like to see an economic association with Canada, what kind would it be?

**Mr. Morin:** A sovereign Québec will have to associate itself with its immediate neighbours, but according to our needs and interests. In any common agreement, Ontario has as many interests to protect as we do. But an agreement with the nine other provinces, an economic association with the European community, with Scandinavia, with any country in the world you like, will have to be in the form of a treaty, and once the treaty has been negotiated, it will have to be monitored by joint commissions. In our mind, there can be no question of a political association of any kind, which would oversee the sovereignty of Québec and, as we are a minority, eventually impose restrictions and constraints. I believe Canada has signed a free-trade agreement with the United States. We would negotiate such agreements with the other provinces and with other parts of the world.

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you.

**Mr. Angers:** I would like to point out something important: Economically speaking, the situation in Canada is not ideal.

**Mr. Morin:** We're bankrupt.

**Mr. Angers:** Economists have always believed that a country should diversify its markets. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you that in Québec, ever since the École des hautes études was founded, since 1907, all our school principals and all our professors have incessantly preached diversification into markets outside Canada, which never happened, because of British imperialism which tied us to England, and because of a second American colonialism that seemed to suit Canada, which never really diversified its markets. Well! A Québec that has always aspired to that, because that's what its economic elite has taught it, a sovereign Québec, while maintaining its relations with Canada — which are based on mutual interest — would hasten to make an effort to go out into the world and diversify its markets in order to place its economy on solid ground with well-balanced foreign trade.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Angers. We'll now move on to another group of questions. Mr. Chevette.

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

Without any insult intended to Mrs. Baillargeon, Mr. Léger or Mr. Morin, allow me first to congratulate Mr. Angers on his 50-year struggle. It is an undeniable symbol of tenacity, perseverance and consistency.

I am also pleased to note that, in your brief, you present Québec sovereignty from a somewhat refreshing angle. We are getting used to hearing about scarecrows, and you present sovereignty as something related to safety. That pleased me immensely as I read your brief.

You also answer those who say that people who support sovereignty do so for emotional reasons. You respond rationally, saying that the need for sovereignty is based on rational arguments.

I'm sure you have attended the debates over the last two days and noted that the Commission agrees on economic association or economic integration. I have a question for Mr. Léger, or anyone else: What do you say to those who insist that political integration is necessary to achieve economic integration?

**Mr. Angers:** First of all, why is economic integration necessary? For our own economic interests, in a reciprocal exchange between — if we're talking about Canada, in this case — the rest of Canada and Québec. There is no other reason for wanting economic integration. It's not that we want to be dominated by them: we want a fair exchange based on reciprocal interests. We don't need political associations with Canada, like with other countries, in order to do that. It's a basis for negotiation. The GATT is an agreement between sovereign countries, and GATT members are not seeking political integration in order to reach global economic integration. What the GATT wants is world-scale economic integration through balanced, reciprocal exchange. It would be the same for a sovereign Québec viewing its economic interests from an economic angle, with full and total power to administer its economy as it wants, without constantly being hampered by an alternative authority that refuses to cooperate, that objects to all kinds of things, that throws a spanner in the works, causes overlapping, accumulates costs and makes the economy less efficient. That's how we see the problem.

**Mr. Chevette:** Also over the last two days, you have noticed that, for all practical purposes, the shopping list is getting longer. I don't know how many powers we've got to, so far, but I know my friend Larose is keeping his pencil sharp. Whatever the case, since yesterday morning, we've heard a variety of briefs, including some from groups who refused to take a stand on certain options, and we now have a relatively long shopping list. What do you say to those who think we can still obtain so many things within the current system?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Léger.

**Mr. Morin:** Your question is rather "lightweight".

**Mr. Léger:** Mr. Commissioner, I would answer that the development which lies at the heart of our brief, as you have noted, since we obviously do not seek independence in order to satisfy our sense of pride, it is independence for development, which is necessarily comprehensive. This development has as much to do with economics and politics as it does with culture. We believe that today, inasmuch as federalism signifies a certain division of basic powers, contemporary progress makes that increasingly difficult for, in the final analysis, everything is interrelated. You can see evidence of it every day. For example, you cannot have a valid economic policy without quality human resources, meaning also the best possible education, health and social policies. And you can't have strongly supported social policies without broad-based, thriving economic activity, and so on. Everything is interrelated. For that reason, it will become increasingly difficult to live under any real federalism. And we believe that a nation's development cannot be split up among several different authorities; a people needs control over all major decision-making in order to coordinate its own development lucidly. When you look at the many development plans in countries today, you see that, whether they are encouraged or imposed, they are always all-encompassing, covering all aspects. We can no longer keep development separate. It seems to us that the federal push for greater centralization is clearly moving in that direction, which is why we're at an impasse, a kind of dead end. Either we accept the inevitable drift towards centralization, or we say: No, no more. I repeat, there cannot be two masters of one development policy, with all the resulting overlapping, cost and paralysis. We think that the establishment of a valid association between Québec and Canada presupposes a clearly defined situation; it presupposes that each person has full control over his own destiny and that the interests made clear by geography and economics will lead them to conclude the agreements required for fruitful cooperation.

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

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Yesterday we heard from the Conseil de la vie française who, like Mr. Bouchard did just before, vehemently denounced the disinformation of which they believe English Canada is victim. These people from Manitoba, New Brunswick and

Ontario told us that they thought the media conveyed an image of Québec depicting Quebecers as xenophobic, intolerant, even racist. And I think that example cited earlier by Mr. Holden illustrates this kind of disinformation, even as taught in our educational institutions. I have two questions. The first is related somewhat to what Mr. Bouchard asked. What could we do to combat such disinformation, which people in English Canada, who have no way of verifying such things, believe? They believe the information, they believe the image of an intolerant Québec to be true. They think this is how it really is.

The second question is: Yesterday, those same people from the Conseil de la vie française told us that they hoped a sovereign Québec would offer them citizenship, in other words, that they would have dual Canadian and Québec citizenship. What do think of that?

**Mrs. Pelletier Baillargeon:** I would say, Mrs. Blackburn, that there is little you can do when faced with bad faith, other than behave in accordance with your own personal ethics, which ultimately find their own expression and speak for what we do. But again, I think the way to counter misunderstanding is to cease sending a double message, both to the English minority and the cultural communities in Québec. A double message creates confusion. These citizens are told by Canada that they are part of a bilingual society, while Québec, through the Charter of the French language, tells them they live in a French state; there is a constant ambiguity, leading to frustration and certain expectations.

In many areas, we already behave like a de facto nation, like a people aware that they are one. But, at the same time, we also still legally belong to Canada and our minorities receive a double message. I believe that if our minorities received just one message, as the cultural communities do in countries like France, most of these misunderstandings would disappear, because then people would know what kind of country they are living in and what its culture is, if they choose to live there, they're called upon to integrate. I think that is the only solution that will put an end to it, because we will always be accused of going against the great national policy of bilingualism. That national policy of bilingualism is the anteroom of assimilation, for us, and it's our downfall.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** A final short question, Mrs. Blackburn.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** No, I asked what they thought of the idea put forward yesterday by the Conseil de la vie française regarding dual nationality for Francophones outside Québec.

**Mr. Morin:** We have no objection to

applying such a principle and we could, with regard to French minorities outside Québec, perhaps send you an appendix to our brief, explaining what would have to be done, for we have always supported them. Mr. Chairman, would you give me 31 seconds of the Chair's time?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Twenty-nine.

**Mr. Morin:** Earlier, Mr. Hogue asked a question we could not answer because our time was up. How to gain independence in 29 seconds, Mr. Chairman. In June 1991, and that's not very far off, the Québec government would have to hold a real referendum with a simple, intelligent, clearly expressed question regarding its intention to declare independence. If this time we said yes, then the National Assembly would state its intention of declaring independence within two years and the very next day it would begin negotiating the conditions with English Canada. And if, in two years, Canada has not heeded our call, other action would have to be taken. My 29 seconds are up, Mr. Chairman.

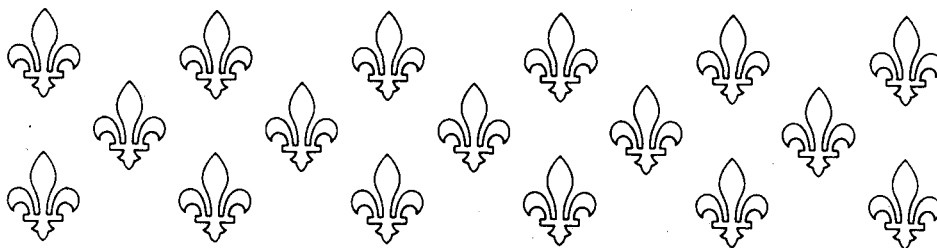
**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We both count the same way; they are indeed up.

Since the time allotted for this meeting is now over, all that remains is for me to thank you for your brief, about which the least that can be said is that it was clear. I also thank each of you for answering the Commission members' questions.

Before adjourning this session, I would like to remind Commission members that we will meet again here on Tuesday, November 13, at 9:30 a.m. There are a few other little details: You have received the resumes of the two briefs we will be hearing on Tuesday, excuse me, the analyses. You will get the analyses of the other briefs on Monday, since there have been changes made to these briefs and they are therefore not yet complete. Lastly, you will receive the appendices to the Mouvement Desjardins brief directly from the Mouvement Desjardins, also at the beginning of next week.

Once again, I wish to thank the group who appeared this evening. This sitting is adjourned.

(End of sitting, 10:08 p.m.)



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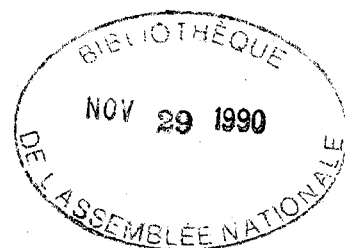
# ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

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PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

## Journal des débats



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

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

**Québec, Tuesday, November 13, 1990**

**No 4**

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 Mr. Gérald Larose  
 Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue  
 Mr. Lucien Bouchard  
 Mr. Marcel Beaudry  
 Mr. Ghislain Dufour  
 Mr. Richard B. Holden  
 Mr. Michel Bélanger  
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 Mr. Robert Libman  
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 Mr. Claude Dauphin  
 Mr. Jacques Brassard  
 Mrs. Lorraine Pagé  
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 Mr. Guy d'Anjou  
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 Mr. Neil Cameron  
 Mrs. Monique Simard  
 Mr. Jacques Proulx  
 Mrs. Christiane Pelchat  
 Mrs. Violette Trépanier  
 Mr. Russell Williams

- \* Mr. Claude Béland, Confédération des caisses populaires et d'économie Desjardins
- \* Mr. Alban D'Amours, idem
- \* Mr. Bernard Landry, Parti québécois
- \* Mr. Claude Gingras, Centrale des syndicats démocratiques
- \* Mgr. Gilles Ouellet, Assemblée des évêques du Québec
- \* Mgr. Jean-Claude Turcotte, idem
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- \* Mrs. Hélène Tremblay, idem
- \* Mrs. Christine Marchildon, idem
- \* Mrs. Jocelyne Olivier, idem
- \* Mrs. Madeleine Blanchet, Conseil des affaires sociales
- \* Mr. Yvon Leclerc, idem
- \* Mr. Jacques Jobin, idem
- \* Mrs. Solange Fernet-Gervais, idem

\* Speakers questioned by members of the Commission



Québec City, Tuesday, November 13, 1990

## Hearings: Organizations

(9:36 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Ladies and gentlemen, I declare open this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. The mandate of the Commission is to study and analyse Québec's political and constitutional status and to make recommendations in this respect.

As this is the second week of sittings, I would like to re-read a passage from the chairmen's speech at the opening sitting of the Commission last November 6: "We are well aware that each member brings to the Commission his or her personal and political opinions and experiences. However, we are also aware that the Commission's mandate is too fundamental to be overshadowed by partisan concerns. Clearly, in the course of the Commission's deliberations, openmindedness, an awareness of what is at stake, and the quest for a vital consensus must prevail."

Before we begin, may I first point out that sittings will end this evening at 9:30 p.m. and that the bus will leave for Montréal at 10 p.m. from door 6. Today, the sitting will be devoted to hearing organizations which have submitted briefs to the Commission. I will read the agenda: 9:30 a.m., immediately, the Confédération des caisses populaires et d'économie Desjardins du Québec, for one hour and thirty minutes; at 11 a.m., the Parti québécois, also for one hour and thirty minutes; at 3:30 p.m., the Centrale des syndicats démocratiques, for one hour and thirty minutes; at 5 p.m., the Assemblée des évêques, for one hour; at 7:30 p.m., the Conseil du statut de la femme, for one hour and thirty minutes; and at 9 p.m., its says here for one hour, perhaps there is a mistake, the Conseil des affaires sociales.

**Voice:** It's this evening at 9 p.m.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Seeing that we are finishing at 9:30 p.m... Fine! We'll change it, if need be.

I will reiterate the rules concerning the length of discussion on briefs: one hour and thirty minutes in the case of national briefs, one hour in the case of regional briefs or briefs from professional groups, and thirty minutes in the case of briefs submitted by individuals.

This morning, we will hear the Confédération des caisses populaires et d'économie Desjardins. Before I give the floor to Mr. Béland, who will introduce his representatives, I would like to remind you that presentation is for one hour and thirty minutes. Speaking time is divided as follows among members of the Commission: 10 minutes with respect to the presentation of the

brief; 10 minutes for the chairmanship; 15 minutes for the government's parliamentary group; 15 minutes for the Official Opposition's parliamentary group; and 40 minutes for members registered with the chairmanship, 10 minutes being allotted to each member.

Members may use their time to intervene once or several times. In the latter case, they must inform the chairman accordingly when they take the floor. One or more members of a parliamentary group may use the speaking time accorded the group. Please bear in mind that the answers and comments of the authors of the briefs are counted in the time granted to the member or parliamentary group which has the floor.

This morning, with regard to the caisses populaires, nearly all members have asked to speak. I will therefore ask each of you to display abnegation and be brief. I do not wish for the answer to be shortened; above all, shorten the question, usually it is the question which is the longest, to enable as many members as possible to speak to the Mouvement Desjardins.

Mr. Béland, would you kindly introduce your colleagues.

#### Confédération des caisses populaires et d'économie Desjardins

**Mr. Béland (Claude):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Allow me to introduce, on my immediate left, Mr. Jacques Bertrand, Chairman of the board of directors of the Confédération des caisses populaires et d'économie Desjardins, and President of the Fédération des caisses populaires de Québec. To the left of Mr. Bertrand is Mr. Jocelyn Proteau, First Vice-president of the board of directors of the Confédération, and President of the Fédération de Montréal et de l'Ouest du Québec and, to his left, Mr. André René, who is Second Vice-president of the board of the Confédération and President of the Fédération des caisses populaires du Centre du Québec.

To my right is Mr. Alban D'Amours, First Vice-president, Management and Development, of the Confédération and, to his right, Mr. Yves Morency, Vice-president, Planning.

Mr. Chairman, I would first like to thank you and the members of this Commission for inviting us here this morning and allowing us to present the viewpoints of the Mouvement Desjardins on the political and constitutional future of Québec.

I would like to stress that the opinion expressed in this brief is not solely that of a handful of senior managers of the Mouvement. We could not have proceeded in this way. As you



know, the Mouvement Desjardins is a highly decentralized, democratic movement. It has over 4 000 000 members, belonging to 1339 credit and savings cooperatives, the caisses populaires and the caisses d'économie, located throughout Québec. They are everywhere. In over 675 municipalities in Québec, the caisse is the only financial institution.

It should also be noted that the caisses are administered by volunteer directors. I am often asked: How much do your volunteers earn? They do not earn anything. They really do give their time free of charge and there are over 18 300 of them who are elected by their fellow citizens. In addition to these volunteers, taking into account all of our subsidiaries, we have 34 000 managers and employees.

That is why, Mr. Chairman, and I wish to emphasize this point, senior managers would not have been able nor wanted to submit a brief which reflected only their opinions. Despite the limited time at our disposal, we decided to consult the 18 300 volunteer administrators, the 1339 directors of the caisses, and the members of the managing committees of our federations and subsidiaries located throughout Québec. The findings of this consultation are presented in Appendix 2 of the brief. The directions and conclusions of the brief submitted by the Mouvement des caisses Desjardins are those of a big majority. In the brief, we express opinions supported by 85 to 95 % of the 10 203 people who participated in the consultation.

I would also like to point out, Mr. Chairman, that we looked at this question as though we were carrying out the strategic planning of a major project. I believe that everyone here knows the usual rules of sound strategic planning. According to the experts, it is a matter of harmonizing the three angles of a triangle which compels us to clearly establish what we want to do, what we can do and, consequently, what we must do. Planning, in a word, means spanning the gap between what we are and what we want to be, or spanning the gap between what we are doing and what we want to do.

(9:45 a.m.)

This Commission was established, I think, to plan, and I do say plan, the political and constitutional future of Québec. The Mouvement des caisses Desjardins wants to make a contribution by telling you what we believe that Québec wants, what it is seeking, and to what it aspires. Then, knowing what it wants, we think that it is worthwhile to know what it can do, ascertain, in effect, its strengths, weaknesses, means and capacities. Finally, knowing what it wants, knowing what it can do, it remains to determine what it must do.

In our view, what Québec wants is deeply rooted in its history and is supported by a long tradition of subtle but ever so tenacious struggles extending over more than 200 years.

These struggles are not a quest for power. They are not the expression of the deepest aspirations of a people who, united by what they are, that is united by their language, traditions, and customs, wish to ensure their continuity. It is in this way that Québec proves that it is a distinct national community, that it is a distinct society. Quebecers know it. They feel it. They live it and 95 % of directors of the caisses, without hesitation, say it and also say that Québec has always acted in order to protect this distinct society and develop it. This is truly what it wants.

Quebecers have always hoped, because they are a conciliatory people, to have this fact recognized and obtain the necessary powers for this purpose through the voluntary gestures of its Canadian partners. I think that from this standpoint, we have a long tradition of legitimate claims. However, despite decades of frank, open negotiations, we have never achieved our goal. To the contrary. Even the exclusive powers granted with the announcement of the establishment of a new Confederation in 1867, even these powers have not been respected and, over the years, have been constantly undermined, so that today, as we know, we can no longer truly speak of the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces.

Little by little, Québec has become increasingly subject to the decision of a majority motivated by aspirations different from its own. Now, even recognition that Québec is a different society, this is recent, is denied.

It is clear: Québec, I think, wants to decide by itself about the appropriate means of protecting and developing its distinct society. This is its great project. It does not wish to leave to others the power to decide about its future. It does not want to entrust to others the power to protect what is most valuable, its cultural heritage and everything that, quite rightly, distinguishes it from those around it.

Knowing what Québec wants, we must ascertain whether it can achieve its will. This is what we have endeavoured to do in our brief and, in particular, in the first appendix. After examining our strengths and weaknesses, after analysing our different capacities, we have concluded that, were Québec to become a society free to adopt the only laws operative within its territory, it would nonetheless be as big and as capable as many other countries which enjoy a very acceptable quality of life.

It is obvious that Québec has strengths. Indeed, the number of its strengths is growing. Some 89 % of the respondents in our consultation, 89 % believe that Québec has everything it needs to succeed: a more educated population, sound financial experience, technical know-how, entrepreneurship, democratic and cooperative traditions, the ability to adapt, and openness to the world. In a word, Quebecers are now confident in the future of Québec.

However, like all peoples of the world, Québec does not just have strengths. It also has a number of weaknesses. This is the advantage of strategic planning. What is important is to pinpoint the weaknesses, become familiar with them, anticipate their effects, and assess the risks they involve in relation to the overall project we wish to carry out. In any strategic planning, when an attempt is made to execute a project, it is rare, very rare, to observe that one only has strengths. You must admit that, if we waited until we only had strengths before carrying out projects, we would not accomplish much. There are pros and cons in any project, but where the urgency of effecting the project prevails, it is essential to rely on one's strengths and work at reducing one's weaknesses. I think that is the most important part. It is always easier to improve ourselves when we are in full possession of our powers, when we do not ask others, and do not count on others to improve our weaknesses.

Knowing what Québec wants and what it can do, it remains to be seen what it must do. At the Mouvement des caisses Desjardins, 89 % of our directors have clearly indicated that they want Québec to take control of all the economic, social, political, legislative, fiscal and administrative levers necessary to achieve its legitimate aspirations. Some 85 %, that is, 5 respondents out of 6, want Québec to affirm its political autonomy and freely choose its partners from Canada or elsewhere.

Consequently, we recommend to the Commission that it acknowledge that Québec is a veritable distinct national community; to recognize that the decision respecting Québec's political and constitutional future belongs to the men and women who live there, regardless of origin, working language or any other factor, by virtue of the right of peoples to self-determination recognized by the United Nations and that, consequently, there is no reason to submit this decision to the approval of a majority of the members of the current Canadian federation; to recognize that Québec must have control over all levers and that, to this end, it must acquire the status of an autonomous national community; to recognize that, having become autonomous, Québec, in a context of globalization, would be able to negotiate agreements with other sovereign nations, in particular those which are its neighbour; and to propose that the final decision be submitted in clear, decisive terms, through a referendum, to the democratic will of all Quebecers; and to recognize that this autonomy belongs to the people of Québec who, by democratic means, will choose its delegates or the government which represents it.

To conclude, we could say that the people is sovereign and its government is autonomous. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Béland. This morning, we will begin with Mr. Rémillard, followed by Mr. Parizeau.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Béland, gentlemen, first, thank you for coming here and testifying before us. With assets of \$ 45 000 000 000, the caisses are certainly one of Québec's most important economic players. You are the trustees of over 4 300 000 Quebecers. This means that your brief is significant. What you are proposing is not mundane. Your brief is interesting, I read and re-read it, I must say, and I would like to understand it.

In recommendation 3 which, in my opinion, is probably the very heart of your brief, you recommend that Québec acquire the status of an autonomous national community. You use terms which somewhat surprised me, in terms of international law and constitutional law, and I would like to be sure that I understood. You say "national community". Is this, in your perspective, synonymous with nation? Because in terms of a "national community", English-speaking Quebecers can be a national community, Acadians... In fact, "national community" can be interpreted differently. In your view, is this synonymous with nation in your brief?

**Mr. Béland:** Yes, Mr. Rémillard, we wanted to write "autonomous national community" as a synonym for nation, in reference to definitions we found in other documents.

**Mr. Rémillard:** With regard to "autonomous", nowhere in your brief did I see the word "sovereignty" directly linked to Québec's status. You do not talk about a sovereign government. You talk about other... about a relationship with sovereign nations, but for Québec you do not choose the term "sovereignty", you choose the term "autonomy". Autonomy, as regards constitutional or international law, as you know, is the possibility to act freely, but within a framework defined with a higher authority; sovereignty means enjoying full powers. Did you make this distinction deliberately or, in your view, is autonomy equivalent to sovereignty?

**Mr. Béland:** Yes, we are not constitutional experts. We are experts in the field of cooperation and the caisses. In our organization, we talk a lot about the autonomy of our caisses. We talk about the autonomy of our federations, it is in this light that we wanted to use the word "autonomy", because, in addition, there is language, finally. You know, in our society, when one uses words, a partisan label is immediately stuck on them. Desjardins wanted to be absolutely non partisan. Desjardins is not... has never been partisan. In that respect, we wanted to use words which are not associated with any political party and it seemed to us that, autonomy being

all the same, for us, the expression of a State which alone legislates within its territory, that is what we wanted to signify.

**Mr. Rémillard:** So, Mr. Béland, if we take recommendation 3, where we read that "It must acquire, speaking of Québec, the status of a sovereign nation", that is exactly what you mean.

**Mr. Béland:** That's what we wanted to say, but what we did not want to say.

**Mr. Rémillard:** That is not what...

**Mr. Béland:** ...what we didn't want to write. I beg your pardon.

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

**Mr. Rémillard:** So, if I understand correctly... what I clearly understand, Mr. Béland, is that you did not want to write in your brief that you recommend that Québec have the status of a sovereign nation. Why not? Does that frighten your members?

**Mr. Béland:** No, not at all. In the question we asked, we spoke of an autonomous national community, that is what we were talking about. We referred to this... We used exactly the words in our consultation.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Very well. With regard to the process you suggest, you suggest a democratic process - this is obviously in keeping with the tradition of your movement... You suggest that people first be properly informed. This is one of the main challenges facing us. Then, you propose a referendum, as soon as possible, so that the people who, as you said earlier in your presentation, are sovereign can take a stand. You are right in saying that the referendum is a highly democratic measure provided that those who are being consulted - the people - are well informed. With reference to your brief, suppose I ask you the following question, Mr. Béland: What question would you put to Quebecers?

**Mr. Béland:** This is a very hard question. What we would ask is undoubtedly a very clear question...

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

**Mr. Béland:** ...a precise question free of ambiguity.

**Mr. Rémillard:** What does clarity mean to the Mouvement Desjardins?

**Mr. Béland:** It means knowing whether Quebecers want to be a sovereign people, who adopt an autonomous government, that is, a

government - and we say this in our brief - which... It is the right of a State to decide, ultimately, about its internal and external affairs. This is what we mean by...

**Mr. Rémillard:** So...

**Mr. Béland:** I would like the question...

**Mr. Rémillard:** So, going back to recommendation 3, it might be said that your referendum would be based on a question stated thus: Do you agree that Québec should achieve the status of a sovereign nation?

**Mr. Béland:** Yes. If...

**Mr. Rémillard:** Is that what it would be?

**Mr. Béland:** Yes... I am not sure that Quebecers today would fully understand, it would be necessary to explain it, because, you see...

**Mr. Rémillard:** Yes.

**Mr. Béland:** ...for five minutes we have been discussing what a sovereign nation, an autonomous nation and so on is.

**Mr. Rémillard:** No, but I would simply, to fully understand the meaning of your brief...

**Mr. Béland:** Yes.

**Mr. Rémillard:** ...under the circumstances, the question would faithfully reflect your brief.

**Mr. Béland:** That's right. Oh yes, absolutely. (10 a.m.)

**Mr. Rémillard:** Very well. Nowhere in your brief, Mr. Béland, do you propose a list of jurisdictions. Several people we have heard here have proposed that Québec have full jurisdiction over manpower, communications, culture, indeed, the entire list we have heard. You are not proposing such a list? You are proposing that Québec become a sovereign nation, but do you see some areas in which we could associate with the rest of Canada? Does your brief mean that we should have our own currency? Should we have our own external affairs, our own army? What are your thoughts in this regard?

**Mr. Béland:** I think the answer to your question is to be found in the explanatory pages which follow our recommendations. On page 38 we have written "The State of Québec would have all powers to decide in the last resort: political, economic, social, administrative and fiscal powers. Only legislation adopted by the Québec government would have effect in its territory, unless, through such legislation, it agreed to associate with other legislative bodies,

for example, within a genuine Confederation.

"In its search for partners, Québec could establish special links with its current partners in the Canadian federation; such links would not necessarily be exclusive". Overall, what we are saying is that once we have become sovereign, it is obvious that it will be in Québec's interest to conclude treaties or reach agreements with others. This strikes us as essential.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Would it be necessary, in your opinion — you are an economic movement, an important movement as I noted earlier — to have a common currency? Would we have to develop the common market? How should we go about guaranteeing this economic security, about which you, as a banker, are obviously concerned?

**Mr. Béland:** Monetary union is, of course, desirable. We think it is even likely because Québec, separating from the rest of Canada, would cause a stir with respect to the economic situation in Canada; it would even be in Canada's interest, I think, because at that time its own ratings could suffer a blow. I believe that it is in the interest of our current partners to sit down and discuss the matter. However, as it is harder to negotiate when one is alone or it is easier when one is alone, all manner of reactions are conceivable among our partners. What we are saying is: Yes to a monetary union, preferably with Canada. If this is not possible, we will have to form a union with others; if we cannot do so with others, we will need a Québec currency tied to a strong currency. When we speak of a strong currency, it will not necessarily be the Canadian currency, which is not deemed to be a strong currency.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Twice now you have said that if it is not with other Canadians it could be with someone else. Obviously, but Mexico is rather far away. Our American friends are closer. Do you think it is possible to share a dollar with the United States of America?

**Mr. Béland:** We could have a Québec currency attached, or indexed, if you like, to the American currency or another currency. I think we should give preference to our current partners because there is, all the same, a tradition, a history. However, should our partners, out of reprisal or because they are willing to suffer reprisals, then I think Québec should adopt its own currency, but adjust it to a strong currency.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Are there other areas in which we could share with the rest of Canada, aside from the currency?

**Mr. Béland:** There is certainly security, the army, there is a series...

**Mr. Rémillard:** External affairs?

**Mr. Béland:** We would have to see!

**Mr. Rémillard:** Very well.

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

**Mr. Parizeau:** Mr. Béland, I think that the brief you have presented today is going to make waves for some time to come. We are all aware that it represents a position the Mouvement Desjardins has adopted for the first time and so forcefully. I cannot deny that I am very pleased about it, precisely because of what the Mouvement Desjardins represents to Quebecers.

However, I would like to engage, to some extent, in the same exercise in which Mr. Rémillard has just engaged, that is, attempt to clarify some matters and, in particular, a number of concepts. It is important that concepts be as clear as possible.

Earlier you said: Sovereignty, if we do not speak as directly about it in our recommendations, it is because we do not wish to give the impression of being partisan. That gives me a bit of a jolt because it is hard for me to conceive of the sovereignty of a country as a partisan concept; however, so be it, let us accept this way of presenting things and turn now to the recommendations themselves to make sure that we understand each other.

In recommendation 2 you state that there is no reason to submit the decision on the political and constitutional future of Québec to the majority making up the current Canadian federation. That is clear. I fully understand that, under the circumstances, there is obviously no question of submitting Québec's political future to the rule of unanimity, or even to the 7-50 rule: seven provinces, 50 percent of the population. Is that what it means?

**Mr. Béland:** That is what it means.

**Mr. Parizeau:** I have some problem reconciling that with the first paragraph of the explanatory notes: "Internally, the Québec decision which would modify the Canadian federation would only have legal value were it approved by the other members of the federation. Were the latter to refuse to accept the Québec decision, Québec would have to make the political gesture of affirming its sovereignty." Is there not a contradiction between the two things? It seems to me that in recommendation 2 you are saying: The decision is not submitted to a majority of those in the current Canadian federation and, in the explanatory notes, you seem to be saying the opposite: We will offer it and, if they refuse, then we will declare our sovereignty.

**Mr. Béland:** Yes. What we wanted to say in the explanatory notes was that under the current rules, we are locked into a Constitution from which we cannot free ourselves and which cannot even change without the consent of our partners and that, I think, we have had recent experiences that have made us understand it better. So, we said: If Québec wants out of the current Constitution, short of a miracle... I will change words, unless, in any event, there is a big surprise...

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

**Mr. Béland:** ...we will have to make an illegal gesture with respect to the Constitution. We will have to pose a political gesture. We are going to change fields. We will no longer be operating under Canadian constitutional law, but under international law. That's it.

**Mr. Parizeau:** Somewhat like Mr. Rémillard, I was surprised, with regard to recommendation 3, at the use of the words "autonomous national community". However, in recommendation 4, you say that it must be recognized that, having become independent, Québec, in a context of globalization, would have the ability to negotiate agreements with other sovereign nations. The word "other" is important. If I understand rightly, autonomous and sovereign, for you, mean the same thing, because you say: Other sovereign nations.

**Mr. Béland:** If you look at page 38 in the explanatory notes, even if we tried to avoid proclaiming ourselves openly in favour of sovereignty, we do say: "autonomy or sovereignty, it is the right of a State, and so on". We favoured the word "autonomy", but we saw it as a synonym all the same, one that is found in the dictionary.

**Mr. Parizeau:** Fine. I now return to the explanatory notes themselves. Here is what I conclude. I think it remarkable that when you discuss a partnership with other countries or with the rest of Canada, when you talk about partnership, you mention, either outside a confederation or inside a true confederation, the place of agencies intended to manage things in common, for example, monetary policy, a common currency.

You still talk about agencies or institutions through which certain things could be managed, but not of a supranational Parliament, not of a supranational government. I interpret you correctly when I assume that the common institutions or the common agencies you are talking about are management agencies and not the appearance of a supranational Parliament. Is that so?

**Mr. Béland:** Yes, that is correct. Our basic position is as follows. Once we have recovered all of our powers and have become a State with the full power to dispose of its laws and make its laws, we will not close the door. We are saying: That State could find advantages. We even go as far as to say... "possible to create an authentic Confederation, that is, a form of political union" for certain purposes. Thus, we are not closing the door, we are not choosing a ready-made model because, as I mentioned earlier, negotiating alone in our offices is always easy. We can imagine all kinds of scenarios. In reality, there are all manner of scenarios which we may not have anticipated, which may be available to us. I think that a sovereign State has the great advantage of being able to examine all opportunities. This is what we meant, basically, in this clarification in the explanatory notes.

**Mr. Parizeau:** Thank you very much, Mr. Béland. I think that the submission of this brief today will be deemed later on to be of genuinely historic significance. With your permission, I would like to leave the few minutes remaining to my colleague, Mr. Léonard.

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

**Mr. Parizeau:** Mrs. Marois, rather. I beg your pardon.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** ...you have about five minutes.

**Mrs. Marois:** Alright. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will not reiterate the congratulations already addressed to you. I think your contribution is obviously very significant and very important in relation to our work. I would like to dwell on recommendation 7 and link it to your initial remarks. In recommendation 7 you suggest that the final decision be submitted in clear, decisive terms through a referendum to the democratic will of Quebecers. And, at the outset, you insist on the fact that this procedure be undertaken rapidly and efficiently, as current tension and uncertainty will have serious consequences for the development of Québec and Canada.

In even more precise terms, I do not necessarily want to ask you a tactical or strategic question, but sooner or later, I think, we will have to ask ourselves this question, in terms of a timetable, when do you think such a question can be asked? Once the Commission has completed its deliberations, when we will have one or more hypotheses to submit, on the one hand. On the other hand, one of the questions raised by the Chambre de Commerce and by businesspeople is the fear that there will be an

overly long period of uncertainty between, for example, the conclusions of our work here and reaching a clear, final choice, to put it in your own words. I would like to know what you think about these questions.  
(10:15 a.m.)

**Mr. Béland:** To establish the deadline, Mrs. Marois, I feel that there are still unknown factors, in particular the scope of this Commission's deliberations. I said on another occasion, because I occasionally occupy another chair here, that this Commission may be a very important event in educational terms. Depending on the scope of the Commission's deliberations, depending on its transparency, if we manage to... And I think that it is starting already, because the conversations one hears here and there now focus a great deal on the constitutional question. Five years ago, there was no talk of a Québec currency or a Canadian currency. Today, the population at large is beginning to take an interest in these questions. Never have there been so many newspaper articles written by academics, by militants in various organizations. I think the more that ordinary people dwell on this question and find out more about it, we will have to hold the consultation when we think that the people are capable of responding with a full knowledge of the facts and are capable of dissipating and distinguishing between fears and reality. In both senses, I hesitate to answer that we must do it in six months or in a year. I hope that we will not have to wait too long. I think you must do it quickly, because instability is due more to the fact that the status of Canada and the status of our constitutional relations are so vague. I think we must settle the matter quickly.

**Mrs. Marois:** I would like to ask you a brief sub-question. Do you see for yourselves, given the situation of the Mouvement Desjardins, with all the assets you have to manage or oversee and about which you must establish policy directions, a role in the transitional phases to reassure people about all the questions there will be about the fact that Québec, even if you prepare a long appendix to tell us that it can, that it is strong enough, and so on, but is there the desire, the motivation and perhaps the necessity above all to intervene during this transitional period?

**Mr. Béland:** I think the Mouvement Desjardins will continue to do what it has always done by showing the advantages and disadvantages of various situations. Obviously, it will not launch a campaign; this is not its role. We have done so in this instance because the government passed a law which stipulated that there is a seat for the cooperative sector and it would like to know what the cooperative sector thinks. We have taken advantage of this seat and have come to say what we think. When we return to our

regular duties, we will not launch campaigns. I think there are well organized political parties which undertake campaigns very well and we will listen, except that we will continue to inform our members about everything they expect to receive from us and that is what we have always done, try to educate our members, especially in the economic field.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have finished. We now commence the block of 40 minutes; I remind you that there are 13 questions. That means three minutes each, if everyone is to speak.

**Mr. Serge Turgeon,** and right after him, **Mr. Ouellet.**

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that it would indeed be superfluous to congratulate you on the clarity of your remarks, but I do want to congratulate you, Mr. Béland, for not being afraid and for not shirking your responsibilities. I believe that is to your credit and to the credit of your directors and all components of the Mouvement Desjardins.

This said, Mr. Chairman, I cannot help observe that the Mouvement Desjardins is one of the very few financial institutions to appear before this Commission. Where are the others at such a crucial time, during such a crucial debate? I do not know. The first question I would like to ask, Mr. Béland, is: How do you interpret the silence of the other financial institutions?

The second question is very simple: The proponents of federalism talk a great deal about globalization; proponents of sovereignty obviously talk about nationalism. Is there a contradiction between the two? Is there not, instead, integration, integrity?

**Mr. Béland:** As for the matter of silence, I will leave your first question unanswered. I do not feel that it is up to me to interpret. Obviously, the Mouvement Desjardins is perhaps... I often say: The Mouvement Desjardins is not just a financial institution, it is a movement which is deeply involved in the community. Our people asked us to be here, so we came. I cannot interpret the silence of the other financial institutions. This is certainly not my role.

As for your second question, I think that the more we become citizens of the world in economic terms, this is undeniable, in cultural terms, in terms of nationalists, now there is a very pronounced interest. Look at everything that is happening in the world. It is true that the planet is getting smaller, that all borders are vanishing in terms of the movement of goods and

capital, but that only awakens even greater nationalism because man is not homo economicus, who is not a complete being. There is also homo sapiens, the wise man, who is, fortunately, cultural, who is something else. Given that we are becoming citizens of the world in economic terms, we all feel the need to affirm ourselves even more in cultural terms. There is no contradiction. This is an entirely natural development, entirely human, entirely normal.

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

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank you, Mr. Béland, for the very eloquent testimony in part 3 of your brief where you describe so well the collective and a number of individual successes achieved by Quebecers.

In my view, if federalism is supposed to serve the interests of Quebecers, one does not find any confirmation of this in part 3 of your brief.

Something is missing from your brief and I ask you the question: Why did you not devote a large part of your brief to the question of currency as your financial institution must be very interested in this question? How is it that in your brief you envisaged neither a Canadian currency, nor a Québec currency, nor a currency tied to the American currency? The Union des artistes which is not involved in business, recommends aligning the dollar with the U.S. dollar and pegging it at around \$ 0.60. Is this suggestion appropriate? Why did you not talk about this matter in the brief?

**Mr. Béland:** Obviously, we feel that the currency is a tool. There is a more important tool which must be acquired first: autonomy, the acquisition of a sovereign State which we discussed earlier. More specifically, on the question of currency, perhaps Mr. D'Amours could add to my answer.

**Mr. D'Amours (Alban):** If we look at the question of currencies in the world over more than 100 years, we realize that the currency is not the essential facet among the choices a people must make to set up a government. The monetary question is part of the conditions under which States are sovereign and decide, after the fact, to enter into monetary unions with other sovereign States or, quite simply, to adopt their own currency and establish a monetary policy.

Today, the problem that arises is that we have been or may be tempted still to defend Canadian federalism on the basis of the notion of monetary union. The notion of monetary union is not the argument that will lead to a choice of political status.

**Mr. Ouellet:** You mean that your members are not concerned about the value of the dollar, regardless of which one is adopted?

**Mr. D'Amours:** The concern about the value of the dollar is constant. That is the reason...

**Mr. Ouellet:** But why do you not talk about it in your brief?

**Mr. D'Amours:** We talk about it in conjunction with partnership and to the extent that, once political choices are made, the choice of a currency, of a monetary union, will be proposed and achieved. In this respect, all of the literature on the question revolves around notions such as optimum monetary zones, that is, which are the best possible monetary unions. Under the circumstances, we may well ask if a monetary union with the rest of Canada is an optimum zone.

History or the long association with the rest of Canada shows that optimization can be achieved in Canada, insofar as a common currency has facilitated trade and contributed to the integration of trade between Québec and the rest of Canada. To some degree, it has also facilitated the harmonization of policies although, in every decade, Québec has made demands with regard to Canadian monetary policy.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Yes, but a very precise question. At present, our dollar, the dollar Quebecers use, is worth about \$ 0.85 in relation to the U.S. dollar. In your view, it will be worth how much, regardless... The Union des artistes says it will be worth \$ 0.60. You're not interested in knowing whether it will be worth \$ 0.70, \$ 0.80, or \$ 0.90?

**Mr. D'Amours:** That depends, Mr. Ouellet, on the monetary policy that is applied. Were a monetary union to be established between Québec and Canada, were directives to be applied by a central agency in whose decision-making Québec participated, the value of the Canadian currency would depend directly on the type of monetary policy applied and the scope of directives jointly agreed upon by sovereign States.

This means that the dollar could be worth \$ 0.75 or \$ 0.80, ultimately as a result of the application of directives, and bearing in mind the economic stabilization objectives agreed upon by both States.

**Mr. Béland:** Let me add, Mr. Ouellet, when you refer to the members, I know them very well, I often hear them talking about the dollar these days and the value of the dollar. What they say, above all, is that they do not feel they have much control over setting the value of the dollar, or monetary policy in their country. This is what leads them to say: If we brought a little

more weight to bear on these decisions...

**Mr. Ouellet:** If they were to ally themselves with the U.S. dollar do you think they would have more control?

**Mr. Béland:** Well, we will decide this in our fiscal policy.

**Mr. Ouellet:** You could have more influence over American monetary policy than over Canadian monetary policy?

**Mr. Béland:** Of course.

**Mr. D'Amours:** It should be noted, Mr. Ouellet, that the choice of associating with the American dollar is what economists call the second choice, to the extent that the lengthy history of Canada and Québec means that the choice must initially focus on a Canadian monetary union. And the Canadian monetary union and Québec's role in it, where it is felt that the harmonization of fiscal policies between both levels of government should be reworked in such a way that Canada's overall economy is strengthened. What people complain about in Québec... Recently, I heard groups of Québec business-people who wanted to go to Ottawa to pressure the government into changing its monetary policy because it puts the Québec economy at a disadvantage. If there were some way, finally, to harmonize its policies in relation to Québec's needs, the entire Canadian economy would be strengthened and the Canadian dollar, which would serve as the common currency, would be stronger. Thus, it is possible to find in a context, I should say, where a reciprocal agreement exists between both States, a context in which the Canadian dollar we want would be strengthened, and our production system would be more productive. This is a consequence of a political choice which uses a currency in a context where common goals have been fully understood.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Turgeon, I know you would like to answer, but as it will be your turn tomorrow at 9:30 a.m., perhaps you could take advantage of that moment.

**Mr. Turgeon:** That is just what I was about to say, Mr. Chairman, and I deplore the fact that someone simply takes a sentence out of a brief which has nothing to do with what will be presented tomorrow. I find that just a bit demagogic and regret it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You are lucky, you will speak tomorrow morning.

**Mr. Turgeon:** That's right. I can reply to

my friend Ouellet.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Now, Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier, followed by Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be docile and take as little time as possible. I should preface my question with a brief preamble. As you are aware, Mr. Béland, municipal governments have a dispute with the government and there will probably be frank discussions on decentralization and the sharing of new powers. On page 33 of your brief, in a chapter which could be entitled "Some conditions for success", you talk about restoring to local and regional organizations the full capacity to act, and you talk about a genuine decentralization.

My question is twofold. How do you envisage this decentralization, and what does the Mouvement Desjardins perceive local and regional organizations to be?

**Mr. Béland:** Obviously, with regard to decentralization, we are strongly influenced by the entire Mouvement Desjardins organization. I feel that our main success is to have decentralized strong local units which are autonomous, which adhere to some extent to major policy directions; thus, "think globally" then "act locally". This is what we mean by a genuine decentralization of powers.  
(10:30 a.m.)

When speaking of local and regional organizations, we wanted to avoid entering into these disputes. We thought: The groups will be organized democratically when the time comes. What is clear is that we will have to regionalize the "think globally" part as well. We must ensure that we are more present. We are in favour of regional development, you know, and wish to encourage it. I think that by decentralizing, we will encourage it even more.

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

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not wish to insist upon the representativity of the Mouvement Desjardins, appearing before us this morning. I would like to stress the democratic process on which is based the position you are presenting this morning. I note that, when various groups have followed the same process, they invariably reach similar conclusions, that is, greater control by Quebecers of their own instruments and levers.

I must confess that the brief, which I have read several times, provides a good historical overview and pinpoints what is at stake. I especially appreciated pages 7 and 8, where you describe international trends in terms of global-



ization, and pages 9 and 10, where you draw a parallel between this globalization and the affirmation of all nationalities around the world. I might add that this will silence all the "confusers" who try, unsuccessfully, to mix up the trends, because the brief has clarified precisely what both trends involve.

Pages 11 and 12 are especially sad for Canada. There you describe very soberly the spectacular decline between 1980 and 1990, years in which the federalists enjoyed absolute power when, normally, after Quebecers reached a decision, they had all the leeway necessary to put the house in order. With what result? Canada has dropped from second to sixth place among the seven leading industrialized nations, we couldn't drop to ninth place because there are only seven members, in terms of productivity, a drop of 15 %: we are behind in technological change, are lagging in research and development and in this regard Québec is bringing up the rear in terms of investment; we have colossal debt. We have spent all our time exhausting ourselves through endless misunderstandings and compromises, as you have put it so well.

I would also like to stress that in terms of monetary policy, over the past 10 years under federalism, the value of the dollar has fluctuated between \$ 0.63 and \$ 0.86. If we are afraid of a falling dollar, let me say that it is at a time when the dollar is worth \$ 0.85 that we have never been in so much trouble. I suggest that we moderate our tone somewhat and perhaps become a little more competitive, so that we can live in Québec from small and medium-sized businesses, in particular.

I would like to hear you clarify the main reason which leads you to say that Québec must first achieve sovereignty, I was going to say put its cards on the table, including the proposal for confederation. Is this a problem of strategy we have experienced or is it a constraint resulting from existing rules for amending the Constitution? What, primarily, led you to make this proposal?

**Mr. Béland:** Before carrying out our consultation in the Mouvement Desjardins, we set up a constitutional committee made up of the 11 presidents of each of our regional federations. I remember very well the reaction of my colleagues seated to my left, who represent the federations with the biggest assets, when we prepared our brief. We had reached the end of the strategy because we said to ourselves: We could perhaps negotiate such and such an item. Perhaps, after expressing our will yet another time, we could attempt to negotiate some things, but my colleagues seated at my left said: We have already had responses to negotiations. Perhaps we were affected by the most recent, the Meech Lake round, which led us to say: This will be a waste of time. We assumed we would

be wasting our time and said: The matter is urgent, my colleagues strongly emphasized the urgency of settling the problem, and we said: As time is short and we must act quickly, there is, finally, just one way to achieve the status of a sovereign state. Then, my God, we know that we are conciliatory and open. We will negotiate some things, but we will have the upper hand to do so. As Mr. Bourassa said, we will negotiate one-to-one, not one against eleven or ten. In this respect, we are in the realm of strategy when we recommend moving quickly to create a sovereign State.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue, followed by Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Hogue:** Mr. Béland...

**Mr. Béland:** Yes, sir...

**Mr. Hogue:** ...we have known each other for several years and I have been familiar with the Mouvement Desjardins for a number of years, right? I was for a long time president of the biggest caisse in Québec and enjoyed a number of highly rewarding moments. I would like to recount a bit of history and, as usual, will try to go very quickly, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Did you say: "As usual"?

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

**Mr. Hogue:** I like your brief very much and perhaps, were I still in the Mouvement, I would have participated in it. I would perhaps have written a number of these pages. However, I would like to make a comparison as history always helps us to pinpoint development, although earlier you spoke of strategic planning and, you twice said that we cannot negotiate alone. To some extent, your brief becomes theoretical as, in order to apply it, it will be necessary to negotiate, in the full knowledge of the importance and weaknesses, the use of concepts and words is so rarely identified that it becomes a weakness. I find that on page 12 and page 25, "Québec has had a decisive influence in the final decision to move forward", when you talk about free trade and in the second paragraph, without being able to intervene, you almost say that a final decision will be needed on the currency, but I won't deal with that, you have already broached the subject. Let me return to a specific question. At a given moment, the caisses populaires, for any number of reasons, established a federation of small caisses. The small federation of big caisses existed for a number of years and suddenly it had to, I know about this, turn toward the regional union and, at that time, again request an association. Mr.

Desjardins came on the scene. Suddenly there was a rupture in the Mouvement, and some 40 years later, it was necessary to return to the bosom of Mr. Desjardin's big family. Do you not think that the history of the caisses reflects the history of Québec and Canada? That is my first question. You can comment on it briefly. Do you not think at the same time, Mr. Béland, that it would be better to study notions of concentration and dispersal, notions of centralization and decentralization, than questions of divorce?

**Mr. Béland:** In response to your first question, Mr. Hogue, I think that the fact that the small federation of big caisses finally associated with the big federation, the Union régionale des caisses populaires de Montréal, was entirely normal because the people involved shared the same aspirations and values. So, our separation...

**Mr. Hogue:** We were a big family.

**Mr. Béland:** We were in the same family.

**Mr. Hogue:** That's it.

**Mr. Béland:** It was really a little family quarrel.

**Mr. Béland:** Of course!

**Mr. Béland:** What we finally did was to change apartment. We lived apart for some time.

**Mr. Hogue:** That's right.

**Mr. Béland:** One day we said: We're so similar, why don't we sleep together?

**Mr. Hogue:** Of course!

**Mr. Béland:** Now. That being said...

**Mr. Hogue:** One does not start sleeping together again.

**Mr. Béland:** That said, I do not see a parallel between different nations.

**Mr. Hogue:** No, no, like a man and woman.

**Voice:** No way.

**Mr. Béland:** As for your second question, I don't know whether the rest of you remember. Ah! But no, centralization and decentralization are methods of management. Among people with a common project, it is now a question of managing the project. We think that because it is the model of the Mouvement Desjardins, that once we have agreed on the project, to get it going we must obviously ensure that power is as

close as possible to the members of society. There is no contradiction. That is the past, overall, as I said earlier, and the "act locally" within a society which has a clearly defined project.

**Mr. Hogue:** No, but do the federalists have more powers than Confederation?

**Mr. Béland:** That... We'll organize a commission to look at it.

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

**Mr. Béland:** I cannot answer that question in front of my federation presidents.

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

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

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

**Mr. Bouchard:** Mr. Chairman, let us say that your movement has always had deep roots in Québec, that you have also always shown concern for the social and human dimensions of your initiatives. At the same time, you are a financial institution which manages tens of billions of dollars in Québécois' savings, which gives a special importance to the firmness of the economic positions you adopt. I cannot see, correct me if I'm wrong, that your position has been watered down by your use of "autonomy". In the brief I see... In your brief you employed the word "sovereignty", you have written it, at the end you have even said that "autonomy" must be interpreted wherever it appears as sovereignty, because on page 38 you say: "Autonomy or sovereignty is the right of a State to decide, ultimately, with respect to internal and external affairs, on how society as a whole will act."

What I find striking is an answer you gave to a question on external affairs. Mr. Rémillard wanted to know if there were more specific jurisdictions you wished to repatriate to Québec. You answered: No, it is sovereignty, full powers. But with respect to external affairs you said: That remains to be seen. However, in this brief, for example in recommendation 4, you do say that Québec's attainment of sovereignty will make it a government or sovereign State which will have the ability to conclude agreements, treaties and... I have noticed that, until now, people have talked little about external affairs. Much has been said about the currency, which is very important, but little has been said about external affairs and I am glad that you talked about them. I see that in its brief, the Parti québécois takes a great deal of interest in the matter.

Are we not underestimating the importance of external affairs in relation to the sovereignty of a country, to its conduct? For example, does not the manner in which we conduct external affairs have a direct effect on economic development? This is not an insignificant outgrowth of government action, it is a necessary extension of internal initiatives. It has much to do with the manner in which a country's cultural and economic life is fashioned. Knowing, for example, that Québec depends so much on exports, is this not a field where, as your brief clearly suggests, we must fully take care of our external affairs?

**Mr. Béland:** I agree entirely with you, Mr. Bouchard. What I meant in my answer was that the Mouvement Desjardins and those who worked on this brief did not dwell specifically on this field. I agree with what you say. I think that the entire external affairs sector is very important with regard to the development of a nation. What I meant in my response, I reiterate, was that we did not look closely at this matter.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Mr. Chairman, one last, brief question, if I may. In terms of negotiations, Mr. Hogue has just said that, in any case, it is somewhat academic, it can be theoretical, as you are sitting alone in your quiet office. One day you will have to negotiate. Thus, your brief presents a somewhat artificial stand. That is what it suggests. Have I understood properly that you do not want to negotiate sovereignty, that you want to declare it in the wake of a referendum, declare it then settle the question during discussions first with Canada, then with other countries?

**Mr. Béland:** Yes, exactly. Otherwise, both sides of the argument obtain. If we speak of renewed federalism, it is obvious that we are choosing negotiation. We are condemned to it, as we want to renew something which exists. When we take the other path — this is what my colleagues here strongly emphasized during our discussions — and say: We already know what is to be achieved by discussing, that is what led us to say: No, we must first achieve the status of a State enjoying full powers; negotiations will take place between equals, not between minority parties in a larger whole.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you.  
(10:45 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Marcel Beaudry, followed by Mr. Dufour.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Actual decentralization of the powers and means you suggest on page 33. As you know, in the Outaouais region in Québec there exists a rather special situation in which 26 000 federal civil servants would lose their jobs in a sovereign Québec. Could you make any

special suggestions to remedy this situation? Would your decentralization go so far as to suggest or recommend that entire government departments be transferred to the Québec Outaouais region when significant portions of these departments are located in the Outaouais?

**Mr. Béland:** Mr. D'Amours will answer this question.

**Mr. D'Amours:** The Québec government will repatriate some government activity. Civil servants now employed in Ottawa could to a large extent be repatriated in conjunction with these responsibilities. Obviously, in our brief, we stress that the duplication and proliferation of programs means an unnecessary tax burden. Clearly, if we are focusing in this context on the economy, Québec's economy in particular, some of these programs will be curtailed and we will save money. This involves streamlining. It obviously means that employees will have to be retrained. It will be the responsibility of the State of Québec to tailor its manpower and training programs to this special problem.

**Mr. Beaudry:** With your permission. Would these new policy directions be planned in advance, or were you to declare Québec sovereign, at that time, from one day to the next these people would lose their jobs. It is all very well to say: We will plan and redirect these jobs in a sovereign Québec or in Québec government departments, but during the time it will take to redirect these jobs, what will happen to those employees or wage earners?

**Mr. D'Amours:** Not all jobs would be affected in this way; a number of them can be immediately pinpointed and repatriated. Obviously, we have not examined this question in depth because it involves the mandate which the new government would have to adopt.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Dufour, followed by Mr. Holden.

**Mr. Dufour (Ghislain):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to speak to Mr. Béland and his colleagues in their capacity as bankers. It is my impression that the caisses populaires are not so very different from the banks and that the notions of debt and of debt service are identical in your organization. You only touch very briefly on the question of debt, in the second paragraph of the explanatory notes, where you allude to the possibility of sharing debt and various assets. I would like you to speak further about this matter, Mr. Béland. We all know that the provincial debt is currently equivalent to roughly \$ 13 000 per capita. A citizen as such does not pay taxes, it is the workers who pay taxes and that brings our debt

to around \$ 28 000. This means that, simply to pay debt service in Québec, \$ 0.175 of every dollar is earmarked for this purpose. The Canadian average, \$ 0.118, is much lower. In Ontario, it is barely \$ 0.105. We already have a difficult situation. The federal debt in Québec represents, for each worker at present, I will disregard the citizen, around \$ 28 000, a lot of money, roughly \$ 57 000, and already we have, as we say in Québec, a very difficult situation.

I do not want you to answer me, Mr. Béland, with talk of the distribution of assets. We have already discussed among ourselves the distribution of assets, I fail to see how we will distribute the Saint Lawrence Seaway, CBC or the National Film Board. I would like you to go much further than your brief and tell Quebecers in a sovereign Québec, this is what is being discussed, what percentage of the bill they will have to pay and what effect it will have on their pay cheques?

**Mr. Béland:** But I must return to my strategic planning: it depends on what we want. If you tell me: We cannot achieve what I think Quebecers want because there is a debt, that means we'll never get anywhere. Persistent unemployment rates, federal transfers, which put Québec at a disadvantage, we're going to let all that go because we have a debt! If we wait for the debt to be repaid before we act, I don't think we'll ever get anywhere. We are condemning ourselves, saying: We're stuck. The country has got itself so far into debt that we'll never get out. That is why I come back to my strategic planning. The debt is certainly one of the things we can deal with. It is indeed present, but we tell ourselves what we must do to protect the quality of life of Quebecers, not only in economic terms, but in cultural terms, in terms of what we are and say to ourselves: There is one thing to be done. Otherwise, we'll never get anywhere. I cannot answer you otherwise.

I would have given the answer you suggested, but I know that would not have satisfied you. What is important, to me, is to know what we want. If we wait for the sky to be perfectly clear before we take off, we'll be stuck on the ground and obviously risk staying there for a long time.

**Mr. Dufour:** But with your permission, Mr. Chairman, it remains that in the economic debate, and you people do focus heavily on the economy, it is not a question we can overlook by projecting. I understand your argument according to which nothing will happen if we look at the debt, because it is so big that we could not tell Quebecers what would be transferred to them in the way of costs.

**Mr. Béland:** Yes, but they know it. They know it. I don't think that the federal and

Québec debts have been hidden from Quebecers. They're fully aware of them. That is not the question. The question... It is not a question of avoiding the debt, either; we say so clearly in our brief. We say: We will respect our commitments. That is how Quebecers have always been. We have never tried to escape through the back door. We have always faced our obligations and then some. We are completely at ease. We say: We are capable... We can follow another tack, even with the current debt. We are taking it into account, it is there, it is in the brief, in the appendices. Obviously, it is perhaps not in the main body of the brief. We cannot turn over that page by saying: If we become sovereign, everything will be alright, we will not need to pay our debts. That's not true. That's not at all what we are saying. Mr. D'Amours would like to add something.

**Mr. D'Amours:** We could add that, given an even slightly optimistic scenario, there would be agreement between Québec and the rest of Canada, in that context, and from a monetary union, as I pointed out earlier, we could find ourselves with a stronger Canadian currency because we have further harmonized our taxation systems and further developed Québec's economic potential. The debt burden and financing the debt, with a stronger dollar and lower interest rates, would be easier for Canada as a whole to bear. We will reduce... At present, it is the debt burden which is undermining our fiscal capacity in Canada as a whole and if, under reciprocal agreements, we aim to reduce it, with a strong dollar and lower interest rates, we will have added a positive note to this entire debate.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you.

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

**Mr. Holden:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You are well known in the English-speaking community. You are very important to that community. As an important man, your viewpoints carry weight. I brag to my friends that I was your classmate in the law faculty of the Université de Montréal. That raises me in the esteem of my fellow Quebecers.

I also remember one of our civil procedure courses. I know that you practised law for a long time; you know what a leading question is. And perhaps that is why I was so disappointed, Mr. Béland, to receive this document marked "confidential", which is a consultation among the administrators and directors of the caisses in which there are numerous leading questions and where I find an underlying premise which I feel is legally dubious, where it is written: Since 1982, we know, Québec has no longer been part of the Canadian constitutional whole.

Legally, Mr. Béland, I feel that this statement is erroneous. But the document goes and you did sign it. To conclude, you say that the committee of presidents can only adopt the conviction widely shared today and already expressed, etc., that we must become independent.

With that suggestion, you send a series of leading questions to your administrators and you tell us that 86 % say yes or agree with you. I am surprised that the figure is not 98 %, Mr. Béland, because, normally, when the president writes to me and tells me what to say, I say yes. But I have two questions, Mr. Béland. First, why don't you carry out a genuine consultation with real questions and why don't you include among the respondents members of the *casse*? That is important, it seems to me. These people may not be as easily influenced in their answers and...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Holden, if you want an answer, you will have to...

**Mr. Holden:** Yes. Mr. Béland, I have two questions.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** One minute remains. Mr. Béland.

**Mr. Béland:** How can I say that I regret having disappointed you? I hope you will continue to brag about knowing me.

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

**Mr. Béland:** It is true, in the brief, that we used the expression that people understand. If you look at videos of politicians, as I did last evening, for some time many people have been saying: We were excluded from the Constitution. We must be reintegrated into the Constitution. This is what I hear everywhere. If I started to make the same distinction during the consultation as I did on page 13 of the brief, where we were more specific, in the consultation, people would not have understood and would have said: What did he say? So, we used terms that people understand. They know very well that in 1982 there were federal Québec MPs who did not vote in the same way as the Québec National Assembly. That is clear. People know that. That means being excluded from the Constitution.

That is the meaning of our question. There were nine suggestions. This short text which strikes you as leading certainly did not sway everyone. Some 23 % of respondents are in favour of the status quo. I believe there was an opening for everyone. I must add that when the president says "yes" in our organization, it is a democratic movement, I would like to see him say "yes" all the time. But that's not how it is.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The allotted 40 minutes are up. Excuse me. Mr. Laberge, perhaps we will return to you later. Mr. Michel Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** A brief question, Mr. Béland, to clarify something you said in response to Mrs. Marois, on the subject of education. You said something to the effect that you were offered a seat on this Commission and were taking advantage of the opportunity to share your viewpoint with us.  
(11 a.m.)

I am not wrong in thinking that even were a seat not offered to you, the Mouvement Desjardins would have come to testify and even if you did not have a seat, it would have come to say essentially the same thing you have said today.

**Mr. Béland:** That is conjecture. Obviously, the fact that we have a seat here and that the opinion of the cooperative sector has been sought was certainly an important incentive.

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** You would agree with others who will come today and who...

**Mr. Béland:** Yes, yes.

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** ...complain bitterly that they do not have a seat. Do you mean that, were you not granted a seat, the Mouvement Desjardins would not have come?

**Mr. Béland:** No, that is not what I am saying. It would probably have come all the same. What I mean is that the consultation conducted here is being carried out in a broad parliamentary commission. People are asked to come and take an interest in the political and constitutional status of Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Laberge, one minute from the Chair's time.

**Mr. Laberge:** Mr. Béland, to begin with, congratulations! I myself am very happy to see the Mouvement Desjardins take a stand this time, because the last time, the Mouvement Desjardins really kept its distance. The figures presented in your brief are very interesting. I have examined them. Even if you've avoided falling into the battle of statistics trap, you still give some interesting statistics. You know how it makes waves, a stand like the one taken by the Mouvement Desjardins. Therefore, I think I can rely on what you have put forward; it's something you've really looked into with your team. I can trust these numbers as much as others perhaps not as well researched.

As for the value of the dollar, I think that we pretty well all agree that at present... and

It's misleading as an argument, and this is the only question I am going to ask, through lack of time. When it is said that it would cost us too much right now to repatriate unemployment insurance, because of the deficit, that we are taking out more than we have paid in, is it not true that we are taking out more than we have paid in, in relation to the fiscal and monetary policies of the federal government, which are geared to Ontario, in relation to Ontario's slightly overheated economy? We've been hit with high interest rates, causing the Canadian dollar to be overvalued, which means that we are losing jobs, that we have more unemployment, and that is why we have a deficit? If we had those powers, could we do better?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Bédard, an answer with a "yes" or a "no".

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

**Mr. Bédard:** Yes.

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

**Mr. Bédard:** No, but I simply wanted to say that we must be careful with these statistics, and that is why we haven't wanted to get into this battle. Because if we follow that line of reasoning, the more unemployment we have in Québec, the more profitable federalism will be.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** There are four minutes left for the Liberal Party, and one minute for the Parti Québécois. Mr. Robert Benoit.

**Mr. Benoit:** Mr. Chairman, you were very involved in the forum on employment. You mention it, for that matter, in your brief, on pages 2, 12 and 18. There aren't many in a better position than the Mouvement Desjardins to realize that, in the coming months and years, economic stability will be important for Québec. We will probably go from this Parliamentary Commission to a referendum such as you suggest, to a confederation, possibly, as you suggest. Through all this there will be one or several elections, and negotiations. What advice would you give, first of all, to your members, to Québec business people, so that this intense period in Québec history unfolds with the greatest economic and political stability?

**Mr. Bédard:** Serenity. I think we must remain very serene through all this. We must not let ourselves be too affected by... I often notice, for example, as soon as we talk of recession, everyone goes into a recession mode. It's as if it were a message, whereas for us, the message we

are sending out right now is this: Because we are in recession, projects we had earmarked for two or three years from now may need to be undertaken now, if we are able. Obviously, we cannot all do that, but for those who can, (and we sometimes have that advantage), these projects should be launched immediately. So the message is to be serene, and to continue promoting Québec's economic development in the most dynamic way possible. I am sure that with the resources we have now, we will be able to hold up our end of the bargain.

**Mr. Benoit:** You who are outside Québec as well, in New Brunswick and Ontario, what advice are you going to give the rest of Canada concerning Québec in the months and years to come?

**Mr. Bédard:** Obviously, you are talking about our caisses. You know, what surprises me, Mr. Benoit, is that, indeed, since the Francophone caisses outside Québec have been affiliated with ours, I would say that they have changed their tune because they know that with a strong movement, therefore, a strong French State, they are more likely to be strong themselves. The Francophone caisses outside Québec, afraid as they were of being assimilated by Desjardins at one time, are now telling us: We understand better why you are determined to get more autonomy, because the stronger Québec is, the stronger Desjardins will be, and the stronger the Francophone caisses outside Québec will be. And they're already seeing this happen, for that matter.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Bélanger. A short question.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** First, a comment on your brief, which, in my opinion, represents a substantial contribution to our Commission; it is also a complete document in that you touch on all aspects of the question, and advocate means for getting there, which to me is extremely interesting.

In this sense, knowing the Mouvement Desjardins' concern for social and community issues, it appears to me that you are slightly opposed to a government that would be too interventionist. You not only recommend decentralization, but also, I gather, increased accountability on the part of citizens. Am I mistaken with regard to this?

**Mr. Bédard:** Not at all. That's exactly how we see it, that's exactly how we think. I would say, that's how we act. That's how we've built our organization at Desjardins, and I think I can say that it works well.

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

Léonard.

**Mr. Léonard:** Yes, Mr. Béland. I would like to thank you for the feelings of pride and confidence in Quebecers you express in your brief.

I would like to ask you a question related to the discussion of terms which we had at the beginning, notably with Mr. Rémillard, and I would like you to confirm that you maintain the third paragraph of your explanatory notes to the effect that "autonomy or sovereignty is the right of a State to decide, in the last resort, in internal affairs as in external affairs, the direction to be given to the collective actions of its members." And you actually equate autonomy and sovereignty. You maintain this.

**Mr. Béland:** Yes. I cannot erase it.

**Mr. Léonard:** Very well. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. Well, gentlemen from the Mouvement Desjardins, thank you for coming here this morning. Our thanks to Mr. Morency, Mr. Alban D'Amours, Mr. Jacques Bertrand, Mr. Jocelyn Proteau and Mr. André René, and thank you, Mr. Béland.

Would you kindly retire to the next room, so that we can immediately call on the Parti Québécois:

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

(Proceedings resumed at 11:15 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** If you would all be seated. We now call on the Parti Québécois, which has, as I said a moment ago, an hour and thirty minutes at its disposal. Mr. Landry, are you the one making the presentation?

**Mr. Landry (Bernard):** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have 10 minutes then. You are accompanied by Mr. Pierre Boileau?

**Mr. Landry:** That is correct. He is Director General of the party.

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

#### Parti québécois

**Mr. Landry:** Messrs. Chairmen, to begin with, I must say, on behalf of my political party, that we are extremely impressed with the work you, the Chairmen, and your colleagues on this

Commission are doing in this crucial phase of Québec's history. There is a certain aura of dignity and serenity surrounding the work of this Parliamentary Commission, probably because it is larger, which is not always true of smaller commissions of its kind. Consequently, I think the population of Québec, regardless of its political stripe, admires the extraordinary efforts of those in this room to promote our community and our people.

Last week, the newspapers reported that some of you were peeved that certain speakers had not taken a position. You will not have this annoyance with us this morning, no more than with the speakers who came before us, for that matter. Nor will you be surprised, since, for 22 years now, first under the leadership of an admirable man whose presence among us and among our people is greatly missed, René Lévesque, we have been advancing, to the best of our ability and with the most democratic fervor, the thesis of political sovereignty for Québec, coupled with economic association with the rest of Canada.

From the very first months of our party's history, these two notions were so closely linked that the movement which immediately preceded the official inception of the party was called the "Mouvement souveraineté-association". Through all the tribulations which you know about, the greater and lesser moments of this last quarter century, the idea has gained ground. It has become increasingly clear, increasingly intelligible, and René Lévesque with his extraordinary sense of the formula, only a few months before his death, said to the students at Université Laval that Québec must continue in its efforts to achieve the status of a fullfledged, recognized country. It is one of the best - possible definitions of national sovereignty: a full - fledged, recognized country. It was to promulgate this thesis, which has increasingly become a reality, that our party did what it did. But we claim no copyright, which is nonexistent in politics, nor any exclusivity. Quite to the contrary, we want this idea to be shared by more and more men and women. And we are not at all concerned if someone has been a sovereignist for 20 years, 20 months, 20 days, or will become one in the next 20 minutes. What is important is that Québec finally choose its own destiny.

You have often emphasized, in your questions and presentations, the need to clarify things. I think that the Commission's and Québec's worst enemy right now is confusion. So at the risk of being repetitive, I will reiterate in simple terms what the sovereignty of a State is. Sovereignty is the exclusive power of that State to make the laws that apply to its territory. That is to say, that all laws to be observed by the citizens of Québec in a context of sovereignty would be passed right here, in this house, the National Assembly of Québec. Secondly, it is

the exclusive power to levy taxes within its territory on its citizens, who, for our purposes, are called taxpayers, which does not mean that the yield of these taxes and levies cannot be paid to multilateral or bilateral international agencies should such economic cooperation be necessary. Thirdly, sovereignty is the power to enter exclusively into all agreements, treaties or accords between nations, linking one people to another. It is at once a little and a lot, and that is what is now practised, in varying degrees, by some 200 groups of human beings who have the status of sovereign nation, from the largest, such as the new reunified Germany, to the smallest, such as the Island of Nauru with its 10 000 inhabitants, including the intermediate and medium-sized powers, the small countries and the medium-sized countries like Belgium.

Why must we continue to strive, as obsessively and persistently as some have in the past, as others do now, for this status for the people of Québec? Quite simply (it is probably one of the most poorly expressed realities known to political science), because it is complex, difficult, and reaches down into the very roots of human nature itself; once a group of people understands and realizes that it has the characteristics of a people, of a nation, it will not rest until it has achieved equal status with other peoples and other nations. It's as simple as that. When a people or nation is expected to parade as a province, even with all the good will and apparent logic in the world, one day, the makeup will wear off and the disguise will no longer conceal what is underneath. Even wearing the distinct society label, with all respect to those who, in good faith, have advanced this concept, will be a disguise. A people, a nation is more than a distinct society. "Distinct society" as a concept was perhaps functional but it was also limiting. And had it been accepted, it would have been very disappointing to our compatriots in English Canada, who would have seen that, the next day, we were lined up asking for more.

Consequently, Quebecers constitute a people. This people, like most others, accommodates in its midst minorities of all kinds, one in particular: the English-speaking minority, British in origin, and those associated with it in the traditional sense of the term. There is no doubt that this minority is also part of the Québec people, as other linguistic minorities are part of the French, Belgian or Swiss peoples.

How do modern peoples who have acceded to sovereignty actually practise it today? Clearly, because of the movement largely begun since World War II, they practise it through interdependence, with large institutions like the International Monetary Fund in particular, GATT, or, on a more regional basis, the European Economic Community, and the European Free Trade Association demonstrating that the prosperity of peoples and the size of their markets

are no longer in opposition to their national sovereignty. Perhaps it was the great political revolution following the two cruel confrontations which battered the Western world twice in fewer than 50 years, that finally brought us to the realization that peoples cooperate with each other in equality and dignity, not when they are forced to do so, but when they sign documents which are accords or treaties.

You have undoubtedly talked a lot about Europe and will continue to do so. It must be remembered that Europe was beset by brutality, by the use of force, by repression, at least 10 times in the history of humankind. And the only Europe to succeed was the one in which sovereign peoples and nations, in the city of Rome, in 1957, founded this exemplary community, a model which has been used by others, Europeans in particular; this model would perhaps be more relevant to your work here; it is called the European Free Trade Association: 30 000 000 inhabitants, six countries, with a flexible structure, durable friendly relations and almost no disputes.

But, one way or another, it can be concluded that, economically, there are no more small groups of people. Luxembourg has 100 000 fewer inhabitants than the city of Laval in Québec, but it has the same market for its manufacturers as Germany and France. The European Customs Union and tariff disarmament have been in force since 1968. Exactly 10 years after the Treaty of Rome, the operations were completed, and goods made in Milan could be sold in Paris as if they had been made in Paris. This is how peoples are cooperating with each other, in mutual respect and support. And I would add that in this context...

**The Chairman: (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Briefly, Mr. Landry.

**Mr. Landry:** Yes, very briefly, I would add that in this context of globalization and homogenization of economic activity, fighting for national identity, language, survival becomes essential to the very stability of humanity. Human beings who discover their diversity, the dignity of peoples and of the men and women who make up those peoples with their own particular characteristics (there has to be an intermediary between the ego and the billions of human beings) will find it increasingly necessary to acknowledge this vital identity by consolidating national destinies. And this is why I say that Québec's acceding to sovereignty is an element that is altogether progressive, exemplary and necessary for the community of nations.

**The Chairman: (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Landry. Mr. Guy Chevrete.

**Mr. Chevrete:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I



am particularly proud that our political party has considered it a duty to present a brief before this Commission. Since this Commission is a creation of the National Assembly of Québec, I would hope that any political party with clear and definite ideas could present them to it, throwing as much light as possible on the subject.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, I will say what my friend, Camille Laurin, said: it would no doubt be superfluous to tell you that I find your brief excellent.

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

**Mr. Chevette:** I will confine myself to two brief questions. The first, to begin with. In your brief, you say that Canada will agree to negotiate with Québec. I would like you to tell us why you think Canada will agree to negotiate with a sovereign Québec, notably on the subject of economic association.

**Mr. Landry:** I think that... I am morally certain that Canada will negotiate an economic association, because of one of the most fundamental laws of economics: self-interest, the egoism of nations, the survival instinct. In all my work over the last years in the field of external trade, I have never run into a country that didn't want to sell, and that didn't want to sell more and more. One of the more dramatic examples, albeit very extreme in relation to the Canadian situation, is the two countries whose conflicts were the most bitter in Western history, whose sinister adventures left 55 000 000 people to die on their soil, Germany and France; these two sat around the table in 1957 in the city of Rome to negotiate, not only economic association, but to bravely and boldly move toward establishing the four freedoms of movement, which they tried and almost succeeded in doing, that is, free movement of goods, services, capital and people, which is the most complex aspect of this sort of agreement.

I chose a very important example, a very significant historical reference; now I'll choose a lesser one. This is a survey conducted in Ontario not long ago, which was reported in all the newspapers, to the effect that, in that province, which is Canada's industrial heartland, the great majority of the population wanted an economic association with Québec.

So for all these reasons combined, I believe that we can certainly have an association. If there weren't any... let us imagine an impossible hypothesis, or a highly improbable one, that there would not be any association. There would be anyway.

So how can I explain such a paradox? Simply because Canada is a founding member of GATT, a general agreement on tariffs and trade, and Québec, on achieving sovereignty, would

immediately be a member of GATT, and would already have an important association, minimal compared to a common market, but one which involves the most favoured nation clause, dispute settlement by GATT panels, the abstention from recourse to quotas and the use of customs only, participation in the GATT rounds, and so on. Québec, if sovereign, would now be at the Uruguay Round, with Canada at its side.

Another feature of minimal association, even without discussion. I must emphasize, I want a close association with the rest of Canada through successful negotiations, but failing that, there is always GATT, as I have said. There will be the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. There will be the Auto Pact; with 95% of automobile production concentrated in Ontario, it is decisively in everyone's best interests, if Ontario is to maintain its standard of living, to keep the Auto Pact, and for Quebecers to continue to buy vehicles.

**Mr. Chevette:** With one of the questions being on GATT, my question has already been answered. We will temporarily give the floor to another group.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We now call on the others. Mr. Roger Nicolet followed by Mr. Poissant.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Mr. Landry, one of the risks undoubtedly facing this Commission is that it be taken over, at the end of the line, by partisan concerns. Let me explain. At the end of this process next March, we must present to the population of Québec a certain number of recommendations, and I will not reiterate this Commission's mandate. The outcome of our work here will, in my opinion, inevitably pave the way for an in-depth reevaluation of the Canadian federation.

That being said, at the end of this exercise, of our work here, we must inevitably, vis-à-vis the population as a whole, vis-à-vis the country, come up with the beginnings of a truly collective process for the population of Québec. Given this perspective, and acknowledging that, if this report is to have an impact, it should of necessity take into account a broader range of concerns than purely partisan ones, is it possible or conceivable that a party such as yours consider a truce, in the face of this collective process which must have a definite timetable? (11:30 a.m.)

**Mr. Landry:** If this Commission decided on political sovereignty, we would certainly not be the ones to fall into line since we have held this point of view for 20 years. So... it would probably be the opposite, and gladly at that. I have already said, if you adopt all our ideas, even to the last detail, or eliminate certain details, we will be very happy. We have said many times, in

perhaps a way that is unusual for a political party, that the country comes before any party. And if this Commission and the present government of Québec were to propose sovereignty to the people of Québec, the political party I belong to would wholeheartedly support the government's efforts in achieving national freedom, and this overrides all partisan concerns.

Otherwise, and in all honesty, I believe I have spoken with openness, and I could not, had I not made that last statement, claim the same level of openness. Should this Commission conclude that Québec sovereignty is not a necessity, the militant men and women in our party are so convinced of the soundness of the idea that they would continue to pursue this goal.

**Mr. Nicolet:** We heard it in the preceding comments, the word "sovereignty" has become a coded word. A simple allusion to the word "autonomy" has already triggered exchanges. In the interests of a wider perspective, could we not return to the concept in lieu of the buzzword?

**Mr. Landry:** By all means. The best way to decode a word is to get down to basics. And the basics are, I won't repeat myself, you know the three: laws, taxes and treaties. As for the rest, well, I hope we will not get into a war over semantics. Neither, for that matter, should words be used to hide one's indecision, or to mislead the interlocutor, especially if that interlocutor is a population in search of its destiny.

I read the Mouvement Desjardins presentation this morning. Mr. Bédard said that he was not erasing anything. And what he has not erased, I will rewrite. Autonomy and sovereignty have the same dictionary meaning. But if the words bother you, get back to the basics, go back to the trilogy: laws, taxes and treaties. If the Commission proposes this, it will receive tremendous support from our political party.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you.

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

**Mr. Poissant:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Landry, I have not had time to read your brief, which I only received late last evening. Still, I am aware of a document which must be substantially the same entitled: "Pourquoi, comment la souveraineté?" Therefore my questions will be based on that. You said before that the Common Market had eliminated all customs matters. Still, in this brief you say that it would be useful...

**Voice:** ...if you would kindly give the page.

**Mr. Landry:** ...that... yes, we absolutely...

**Mr. Poissant:** ...on page 19. Border controls between Québec and Canada will still, however, be necessary to exercise certain functions such as collecting customs duty on foreign merchandise destined for the Québec market, coming through Canada in transit. I think that is correct. Still, you said: "Elsewhere..."

**Mr. Landry:** ...Yes, it's taken from other places. You will find it in all treaties of its kind. It is called the "rule of origin." It is in the book *Échange Canada-U.S.A.* Merchandise coming from Hong Kong and entering through Los Angeles is not American merchandise when it arrives at the border at Lacolle. A certificate of origin is needed and Canadian customs duty must be collected. This is a classic clause, so to speak.

**Mr. Poissant:** Very well. But still, you told us that in the Common Market, customs tariffs had been eliminated; that you can enter... it's evident, for that matter, when you go to Europe; it's much easier if the country is a member of the Common Market. Then you can enter more easily.

**Mr. Landry:** Yes.

**Mr. Poissant:** ...whereas here we will have to pay, I imagine, at the borders separating us from Canada because we could easily pass through Ontario to enter Canada. That may be only a minor detail but it is nonetheless an important one to me. But what is important to me is the question of currency. You say on page 23 of this little document: The establishment of a monetary union is as much in the interests of Canada, for, and this is important, if Québec decided to create its own currency, the Canadian dollars in the hands of Quebecers would leave Canada with a huge debt to Quebecers.

If it isn't that, then we come back to an agreement on currency, and there, it's interesting because you say: We return to about where we are today. Still, you put a small condition on it: We may need representation, and here I am simplifying, and have a discount rate, perhaps, which would not be more than two points above or below the... But who will decide what this discount rate will be, in the event that... Therefore, I come back to monetary union. And who will decide that? Will we have a discount rate that is different from Canada's and Québec's? That, to me, is very important.

**Mr. Landry:** First, I must make it clear. I don't address all your comments, but, technically speaking, why is it that in Europe, as of January 1, 1993, a truck will be able to travel from the northernmost areas to Brindisi in the south of Italy and not have to stop once at any station? Because they have a common external tariff. It's

very "commode" (convenient), because in that case, the problem of origin doesn't come up. You will see, for that matter, that the word "commodité" (commodity) in economics is a key word. There are many economists around this table, and it is for reasons of "commodité" (convenience) that we will offer our ex-compatriots in Canada a monetary union when the time comes. Our trade with them is enormous, and theirs with us, and this trading would not be made impossible. It would be complicated, and could annoy the regular commuter between Montréal and Toronto, for instance.

Therefore, we suggest a common monetary unit, such as we already have, such as the European Economic Community is trying to create. There is already the European Monetary System, the snake, the ecu, etc., which is really moving toward a currency where national units will disappear and be replaced eventually, within the next 10 years or so, by a truly multinational unit. We want, with Canada, to have this multinational unit of currency, and, consequently, to manage it in a multinational way. Therefore, an issuing institution, a central bank, where power will be more equitably shared and where Québec and its government can exert a decisive influence.

Having said that, Mr. Poissant, I'm sure that you know these issues as well as I. You know that the practice of monetary control comes under the jurisdiction of a certain authority. Mr. Alan Greenspan doesn't take orders delivered on yellow memos from the White House, and the Governor of the Bank of England doesn't chase after Mrs. Thatcher when he wants to set a discount rate. The Governor of the Bank of Canada, alas, is not taking orders from the Government of Québec on how to manage our economy, we all know that.

So, in the context of a bi-national issuing institution, neither party would have complete power over the governor who, in all good conscience, should control the currency. All we can hope for is a better share of the power, and that the governor be a Quebecer from time to time, something which has never happened in the history of the Bank of Canada. In short, we won't have everything, but we'll have more.

For our compatriots in the rest of Canada, I suggest the following: New Brunswick also suffers from centralization in matters of monetary policy; British Columbia as well. Actually, our monetary policy is established relative to Ontario's over-heated economy, and it has happened 20 times in the studies we conducted on the economic situation, as far back as we can go in the statistics, that Québec has lost billions and billions of dollars, like New Brunswick, which has lost less because of its size. So, with a bi-national institution, the influence of Québec would be very much appreciated by our former compatriots in Prince Edward Island and New

Brunswick, who have also had enough of paying for inflation in Ontario.

**Mr. Poissant:** I would like to ask a sub-question, Mr. Chairman, if time permits. Does it mean that two discount rates might be possible with this central bank, one which would apply to Canada, and one to Québec?

**M. Landry:** But I want you to ...

**Mr. Poissant:** How will the non-residents look on this gesture?

**Mr. Landry:** First, I want you to take note that this is already the case. Mr. Béland could have explained it to you from A to Z. He represents the largest banking institution in Québec with all due respect to everyone present around this table. It is not subject to the Bank Act in Canada, and it is as decentralized as possible; there are meetings in all the villages, including my own.

So we must not be shocked by a monetary policy which could differ slightly. We don't have a great deal of room to maneuver with discount rates. The U.S.A. is a fantastic example as well. The Federal Reserve Board with 12 decentralized banks which have a certain amount of room to maneuver, and the Americans have all been in the same country for 200 years, except for Texas, which joined a bit later, and they have managed to have a relatively decentralized monetary system. But even there, I don't want to mislead you, we don't want to have all the power. This bi-national institution would be part of the International Monetary Fund and would follow its rules, with its unit varying according to the system of floating rates of exchange, controlled as has been done since the Jamaica agreements in 1976... in January, I hasten to say, because that is when the Canadian dollar began to fall, not in November.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Very well. Mr. Louis Laberge, who will be followed by Mr. Libman.

**Mr. Laberge:** Very, very quickly, Mr. Chairman. The Parti Québécois in its brief did not mislead us. In fact, you took a clear stand. That being said, I did not notice, and I don't remember, do you advocate a clear-cut, precise question to be asked by means of a referendum? Yes, eh? I didn't recall.

**Mr. Landry:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, and we are trying to convince all of our members to think likewise.

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

**Mr. Laberge:** Therefore, a referendum as

quickly as possible to decide this question.

**Mr. Landry:** Yes. You know that our party is discussing this very openly. It's in all the newspapers every day.

**Mr. Laberge:** No, I'm non-partisan.

**Mr. Landry:** And we are happy that this discussion is taking place. We would be somewhat distressed if it had to happen behind closed doors or not at all, but it is happening the way we wanted it to happen. Since the President, Louis Laberge, expressed a certain satisfaction with our brief, I must say that the sympathy shown by his powerful trade unions for the cause of Québec sovereignty over the last years prompts us all the more to have the same opinion as you on this question, that is to say, a referendum, a clear-cut question, through which Quebecers can choose their own destiny.

What is the advantage of a referendum with a clear-cut question? First of all, I think it will win. If I saw a poll to this effect, I wouldn't believe it. If I saw two, I wouldn't believe them. If I saw 10, I wouldn't believe them. I've seen two dozen. I believe the referendum would be won. Then, a referendum won on a clear-cut question would enable us inside Québec, vis-à-vis our compatriots in Ottawa and in all the capitals of the world, to record that Québec has decided to be sovereign, and that would be very important in managing this sovereignty.

**Mr. Laberge:** Mr. Chairman, a question I had not prepared beforehand, but the answer a moment ago prompts me to ask it. I just want to be sure I understood. It seems to me that you said earlier that if the Commission were to recommend a referendum with a clear-cut question on the sovereign autonomy or autonomous sovereignty of Québec...

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

**Mr. Laberge:** ...of Québec, your party would endorse this question with no hesitation whatsoever.

**Mr. Landry:** Absolutely. Because of Mr. Nicolet's reservations on the meaning of the words, I make it clear that it would contain the trilogy: taxes, laws and treaties. Then you have understood very well, I was going to add, as usual, Mr. Laberge. That is what we meant.

**Mr. Laberge:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** There are eight minutes remaining in this block of time. I call on Mr. Libman.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You

are aware that, as the third Party in the National Assembly, and as an Opposition Party, we may only direct questions to the government. We would often like to ask questions of the Parti Québécois, but we may not. Today, we are taking advantage of the situation.

**Mr. Landry:** We should be able to settle that quickly.

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

**Mr. Libman:** I was expecting you to say that. But today, we are seizing the opportunity. Mr. Landry, are you ready to acknowledge that, should Québec become sovereign, the other groups in Québec who wish to remain within the country could want to lay claim to their own territory? I am obviously speaking of sections of the Outaouais, of certain municipalities that would not be in agreement, and that could hold their own referendum to see if they could achieve independence or follow Québec's lead, or perhaps, the Inuit, the Cree, certain sections of Montréal, for example?

(11:45 a.m.)

**Mr. Landry:** Mr. Libman, I will begin by making the distinction you yourself should have made between the various minorities you mentioned at the beginning of your question, and the nations that first founded this country: the aboriginals and native peoples. I will treat it as a separate question and come back to it.

For all the others, my answer is straightforward, sincere and clear. No. Except for the aboriginals, there is, on this territory, on this soil, but one people, with a culture, a language spoken by the great majority, a common history of good times and bad, and that people is the Québec people. And in the eyes of the United Nations Charter, it is the only people on this Québec territory, aside from the aboriginals, with the right to claim national sovereignty.

Even Manitoba cannot claim, in the eyes of the world, to represent the Manitoban people, as Québec can claim to represent Quebecers. There is no "Manitoba Nation". I have never heard of it. There is no "New Brunswick Nation", there is no "West Island Nation", there is no "Pointe Gatineau Nation".

**Mr. Libman:** Yes. It is clear that many do not share this opinion.

A second question, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Landry:** With all respect.

**Mr. Libman:** Another question. Do you share Pierre Bourgault's opinion when he suggests in his book dedicated to your Leader, that the State should limit the news media for a certain time as an emergency measure to enable the Québec government to be in control of the

situation at all times?

**Mr. Landry:** To begin with, I don't want to speak for Pierre Bourgault. It's not an affirmation, it's a question. And if you want to have the debate of your life, Mr. Libman, go and have it out with Bourgault on this question.

**Mr. Libman:** But do you share this opinion?

**Mr. Landry:** I will answer on behalf of the Parti Québécois.

**Mr. Libman:** Do you share this opinion?

**Mr. Landry:** For 20 years now, I believe, and even those who don't share our political allegiance confirm it, we have reflected, in Québec and in Canada, an exemplary image of democracy in every respect, whether formally at meetings, in the funding of political parties, or in the creation of the law on access to information passed in this Assembly before your time. You would have voted for these, I'm convinced.

When I saw certain allusions in the press to the effect that our party would possibly limit the freedom of the press, I tell you, I was profoundly appalled. I was profoundly appalled as a democrat. It is necessary to answer certain questions, but it is almost humiliating. But I will answer yours anyway, sir, yours in particular; no matter what you say or think, and sometimes you say things that wound us deeply, we will be the first to fight for your right to say them.

**Mr. Libman:** One final question, Mr. Chairman.

So, I assume he is not of the same opinion as Mr. Bourgault. One final question. René Lévesque, who was a democrat, was humiliated by certain sections of Bill 101 that set aside individual rights. He was awaiting the day when those sections would no longer be necessary. So, the question is as follows: as soon as Québec gains sovereignty, which would represent the ultimate cultural security for it, for our provinces, will those sections of Bill 101, such as the ones respecting signs and other elements, will the "notwithstanding" clause be necessary in a sovereign Québec once we obtain that final cultural security?

**Mr. Landry:** First, technically, I suppose you have made an honest mistake, but you do know that if Québec were sovereign, Canada's Constitution would no longer apply in Québec. Therefore, the "notwithstanding" clause would no longer hold any meaning. But that is a technical aspect.

More basically, I will say that time does not respect what we do without it. And the prevailing situation in Québec is the result of

three and a half centuries of history, in particular, of two and a half centuries for the crucial points you have mentioned. It will not be corrected overnight. I hope that it will be corrected in a very short time. And the protection of the language in Québec will be maintained as long as it is necessary. But I would like to discuss the matter with you at length to find out when, honestly, this will no longer be necessary.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** All right? Fine. I was mistaken a moment ago. Instead of eight minutes, there remain about 20 minutes for the question period. We will now go on to Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier's question, followed by Mr. Beaudry's.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Mr. Chairman, Mr. Landry, if we briefly recall what took place 10 years ago, and remember what were called falsehoods by one side or the other, and if we wanted to remake history just a little and go before the Québec people and ask them for a referendum. There are certain things that we would have to tell them clearly. As a teacher from way back, I have found that in order to change things one must learn how to make people want something. There are certain things which... The people with whom I come in contact daily, for example, in my position as mayor, ask us questions. They are worried, and their main concern is the standard of living. Suppose that Quebecers were to declare themselves in favour of independence. Suppose, imagining the most pessimistic of possible scenarios, that we would suffer some isolation. What would happen to the standard of living of Quebecers? When people know that they really take stock of their vehicles, their holidays in the sun, their end-of-week purchases? What would happen in this type of situation? I do not want to brandish a bogey, that is not my... I want to know what answer we can give people who ask us about this on the street.

**Mr. Landry:** Teachers always ask the best questions. I must mention, by the way, that I do not subscribe to one part of your question, since it is no longer possible. You spoke of isolation. Today there are no longer any isolated countries, unless they want to be isolated, and even then, there are no longer any that want to be. One would have to look in the political science anthologies to find a country that wants to isolate itself. You are no doubt aware that the Soviet Union requested admission to GATT and was admitted as an observer. You are no doubt aware that Tunisia entered into it three months ago, Mexico, three years ago, Venezuela, three weeks ago. I would say that, as soon as modern communications allow, Québec will be a member of GATT, that it will sign agreements on the free flow of goods and services between con-

tinents and accords with all the partners who want to sign accords. And I would reiterate, and this is in a way an experience for which I have paid dearly in my government capacity, that I have never come across a salesman who did not want to sell. When, with businessmen from Lavalin, SNC or other Québec groups, masses of us would swarm into a capital to sell our products, the Spanish, the French, the Belgians were already there. Isolation is an antiquated notion in contemporary international economic law. Trade is what preserves the standard of living. If there is no isolation, there is a standard of living, under certain conditions, and Québec has met them. Heaven knows, it has met them, especially since 1960 and the start of the Quiet Revolution, by its work, its technology, the training in its universities, its audacity on foreign markets. You know that, for many years now, the leaders in Canadian foreign trade have been Quebecers.

Since I do not want to be technical or fastidious, and this can happen, even with teachers, I am going to give you a reference, which, although it has been published, is not well known. In an economics manual called **McConnell, Pope, Julien**, Professor Pierre-André Julien published a table illustrating Québec's trade balance, over a 20-year period, compared to its balance of payments. He demonstrated that, for most of the period, I believe it was 14 of the 20 years, the surplus balance of Québec's trade subsidized Canada's trade deficit. This means, especially for those who enjoy money matters, that the problem we would have had, if there had been a Québec dollar at that time, is that it would have perhaps been a little too strong against the Canadian dollar, which would have complicated our sales on the Toronto market; this is another reason to favour monetary union.

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

**Mr. Beaudry:** Mr. Landry, you were recently in the Outaouais region, you came to give a lecture at the *Chambre de commerce* and you must have met many people who were a little concerned about the Outaouais region, about the economic life of Outaouais in a sovereign Québec. My question is twofold: in that context, how would you deal with the problem of the 26 000 federal civil servants who work in buildings, as you mention on page 19 of your brief, that would automatically become the property of Québec, and how would you handle the case of 15 000 other employees who live within Québec and work in Ontario's private sector?

**Mr. Landry:** First of all, I believe, Mr. Beaudry, that on this Commission, as well as

having the same role as the other members, you have a vital role, owing to your region of origin. Your region, which I know well, I did in fact go to the *Chambre de commerce*, but it so happens that I also work occasionally in your region. I go there every week. I am a professor at the *Ecole nationale d'administration publique*, Hull section, where I give courses in economics to federal civil servants, who, I might add, voluntarily cross the river to come and hear them. Therefore, coming from that region, you have a key role, because it is Québec's only border zone, in the full sense of the term. We share a border with Vermont, but it is practically all trees on either side; with New Hampshire, the same thing. There, we are face to face with English Canada, with the Anglophone culture, the dynamism, etc. And Hull, Gatineau, Aylmer and surrounding areas are our window on the rest of Canada on the other side. For this reason, this pole is of vital importance to Québec and must be consolidated. And I think that any Québec government that proposes sovereignty and has the mandate to achieve it, should, whether it is our party or the Liberal Party; in your case, there is not a chance...

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

**Mr. Landry:** ...that party must make a formal commitment to the men and women whose careers are in the Canadian government and who work for the State, which is still our State; it is not their fault that they are federal civil servants. They should have the assurance of the Québec government that they will be transferred to the Québec State's payroll with the same status, same salary, same privileges. This is the first assurance that must be provided, and our party will provide it. And I hope that the others will do the same.

Secondly, because of the strategic importance of the region, I believe that any party must be, and ours is, committed to maintaining jobs in large numbers, very large numbers, in the region. How can it do this? You are well aware that we have made calculations, because people like you have been asking questions for a very long time, and that we have made these calculations. And these calculations show that, overall, Québec is underrepresented in the federal public service and its agencies. This means that, in order to assume the same responsibilities as the federal assumes at present, not only will we require all the men and women available, but even more, eventually. This means that there is no mathematical problem with the civil servants who work in your region. All the same, to be safe, I would add that the Québec government must be committed, for the reasons I outlined earlier, to moving any agencies connected with the interface of economic associations between Québec and Canada to this area,

should the need arise. Hull, Aylmer and Gatineau must become the Brussels of the economic association or the Strasbourg of the economic community.

**Mr. Beaudry:** My second question was related to the employees who work in the private sector on the Ontario side, live in Québec and number 15 000. How are these employees treated?

**Mr. Landry:** I believe I have already answered that question, though indirectly. You are correct in insisting. I answered it when I said that a modern State pursues the four freedoms and does everything in its power to allow goods, services, capital and people to circulate as freely as possible. And this would not be the first situation of its kind in the world. Between Spain and Gibraltar, for example, there is incredible movement at the border, morning and night, and this movement must of course be kept free and favoured, perhaps by better bridges and better access roads.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Still, this traffic is quite recent, because, for a time, the borders between Spain and Gibraltar were completely closed.

**Mr. Landry:** I do not want to get caught up in the history, I am not an historian, but I have the feeling that our ties with Canada are older than the ties between Gibraltar and Spain, since for a long time the border was impenetrable. With certain exceptions.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Lucien Bouchard and then Mr. Dufour.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Landry, I believe that, among other merits, this morning's two sessions perhaps allowed the Commission to partially avoid one of our problems, that of labels.

**A voice:** That of...  
(12 p.m.)

**Mr. Bouchard:** Of labels. From the moment we address the basic issue that brings us together, according to adherence or non-adherence to one concept or another, we come into difficulty, because it is charged, because there have been elections and election campaigns, much discussion, and so on. I think that when, this morning, you invited the Commission to attempt to define the options, in terms of content, you did us a great service. One of the things I noted, for example, was that you reminded us that it is around the triptych of sovereignty, law, tax and treaty, that we should try to define sovereignty. It has also appeared to me, from the start, that the people who come here have that empirical and very practical attitude of the

average Quebecer, which is the attempt to define things by their reality.

For example, there were the people from the Québec Chambre de commerce who made a list of the powers that we should recover. It is apparent to me that we are on the way to completing a sort of picture which, at the end, we will of course have to label, but a picture of sorts is being put together, or compiled. And it is clear to me, for example, that two of the three aspects you mentioned, tax and law, we are in the midst, quietly, little by little, by sedimentation, without being too aware of it, of concluding that, yes, Québec must recover all its taxes and that Québec must regain its legislative power in its entirety. But the third aspect, which has remained somewhat in abeyance, is treaty.

There is a sort of paradox about this which strikes me, personally, and this is that even when business people refer to the necessity for Québec to recover its economic levers in order to outline its economic decisions itself, they then say: the questions... international affairs, foreign affairs, Ottawa could perhaps continue to take care of that. There is a tendency in that direction. How can we separate foreign affairs and economic affairs? How can we separate the handling of Québec's economic affairs from foreign trade and so on?

**Mr. Landry:** Your experience and mine, obviously to a lesser extent, demonstrate that the two notions are inseparable, especially in a world where homogeneity is achieved by the economy and where the great majority of treaties today are economic agreements. Even great diplomacy, such as American diplomacy, French diplomacy, in an eminently aggressive way, you know, Canadian diplomacy, which tries to do as much, retrain its staff in overdrive to face economic realities. Ambassadors are no longer there to guarantee that there will be no war and that peace will persist. The heads of State can telephone each other. Every six months, the Group of 5, the Group of 7 and the Group of 20 hold summits. Today, world diplomacy works on economic questions, and it would be extremely unwise to want to create a State which we would call sovereign without ensuring it exercises its economic diplomacy in all the capitals of the world. My friend Jacques Proulx would be highly reassured this morning if there were a Québec ambassador in the city of Geneva to participate in the GATT negotiations. I have experienced, and I say this with all due respect for Canadian diplomacy, they do what they can, but there are others who are not even of the same political allegiance as I who have doubtless had the same experiences, I have seen Canadian ambassadors, you know, who are not helping us at all from an economic standpoint abroad. First of all, because they seem not to

know the difference between Rimouski and Chicoutimi, which is an extremely serious thing...

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

**Mr. Landry:** ...and that is the greater hypothesis. They do not know the issues. The lesser hypothesis is that they prefer to favour others. And the Québec business people who have accompanied me on economic missions have observed dumfoundedly that their diplomats were often not working for them. And this is a tragedy. Québec is an extremely open economy. Our imports and exports account for 40 % of our GNP. In trading, we rank among the leading nations of the world, and yet we are not represented in Atlanta, Georgia, and we currently have no one in Eastern Europe to witness the thaw and cooperate economically with these countries? It would be an appallingly curtailed sovereignty that neglected its international relations. If we want to be part of the concert of nations and assume our role with dignity, we must be present. When Lévesque spoke of a full-fledged and recognized country, the term "recognized" meant that a Québec ambassador was present in Washington and Paris and London and Moscow and all the other important capitals, of course, with a team of men and women selling products, purchasing patents, promoting our technologies. Our future standard of living, and this you know, there are so many economists at this table that, at times, I feel there are too many, because the other realities of sovereignty, such as national identity and cultural values, which are related to being international, must not be overshadowed. Did you know that Québec, with its culture, with its institutions, with its creativity, is not directly represented at UNESCO? This does not mean that there is no Canadian representative at UNESCO or that he is not highly respectable, but that we are not there when important decisions are made, even in cultural matters.

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

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I should mention that there are three minutes left for this set of questions.

**Mr. Dufour:** First I would like to say that Mr. Landry's presentation was brilliant, but I must tell him that I preferred it when he used that brilliance to defend the free trade issue, an issue which, by the way, has brought us together on certain occasions.

I am going to return to the standard of living, a question that was touched upon by our colleague, Mr. Beaumier. We know that, in

Québec, we have achieved approximately 3.2 % or 3.3 % growth over the past 20 years. According to the OECD, this would rank us about eleventh among industrialized countries. You mention this in your brief, stating that this puts Québec at once among the small number of the most developed and competitive countries.

I have no quarrel with the OECD data. I have two questions, Mr. Chairman. This first: should we not recognize all the same that, in part, this 3.3% is a result of our belonging to Canada? And, second question: do... I do not want you to tell me that we are going to maintain this standard of living. Clearly, you are going to affirm this, and it is already in the brief. But, taking into account the fact that Canada will be smaller, that, for example, we are starting negotiations with Mexico, Québec on its own against Mexico, I will put the question differently. What are the difficulties we will come across in maintaining this standard of living?

**Mr. Landry:** Mr. Dufour, you have very kindly evoked the day I sat at one of your tables to defend a viewpoint of yours. I hope one day that you will come to one of my tables to defend my point of view.

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

**Mr. Landry:** In the first instance, the issue was free trade, in the second, it will be sovereignty. You mention that Canada is in part responsible for the standard of living in Québec. Québec, if it were sovereign tomorrow morning, would be approximately the 20th economic power in the world. So, it was a good idea to avoid quarrelling with its viability, because this would be an insult to all those ranking below 20. There are 202 sovereign countries; therefore, its viability is not to be questioned.

I want to tell you that, and you guessed it, I am not objective, I do not lay claim to objectivity. But, if I were at the University of Toronto, I would say the same thing, and, at the University of Saskatchewan, I would say the same thing, and I am at UQAM. I would say that, unfortunately, to a very large extent, Canada's standard of living, because of the fact that its population is concentrated in a 150-kilometre corridor along the northern border of the United States of America, depends on its exploiting the natural resources and selling them to 225 000 000 neighbours to the south, who have experienced the greatest economic adventure in the history of mankind.

In this context, if you accept my premise, this means that the fact that Canada forced us, from the time of Sir John A. MacDonald and the National Policy, to trade east and west for practically a century, against nature and against logic, when our markets were in New York and



Boston, and that 600 kilometres from the area I am talking about, there are already 125 000 000 solvent consumers, if Canada had not kept us on the British Empire's northern markets. They wanted to achieve an east-west policy with the head of the axis in London; London, Halifax, Montréal, Toronto, Winnipeg and all the way to the Pacific. We did that for a century. It was Wilfrid Laurier who was right, Wilfrid Laurier, in 1911, when he saw that, particularly between 1865 and 1911, Québec had lost 1 500 000 of its population, that we had lost 1 500 000 people because of this forced east-west adventure. Wilfrid Laurier understood the tragedy. In 1911, he proposed that the people form a reciprocity agreement with the United States of America; he was defeated. A strange turn of events, I might add, by a conservative government based on Rudyard Kipling, in particular, as appointed thinker and preceptor of the British Empire. So, personally, I think, Mr. Dufour, with all due respect, that Canada has cost us very dearly. But, as Mr. Lévesque had a knack for expressions, I am going to try to risk one myself. Mr. Lévesque said that Canada is not a gulag. And I say: "Nor is Canada the third world for Québec."

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

**Mr. Landry:** They have done nothing but wrong.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The question period is now over. We will go on to Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first of all, if you will, I would like to respond to an initial comment made by Mr. Chevette. I want to confirm to you, Mr. Chairman, that the Liberal Party of Québec will indeed not come and testify here, before this Commission; it will not come and testify, Mr. Chairman, for one very simple reason: we have nothing to prove. Between the parliamentary wing and the Party itself there is a communion of spirit, that privileged relation that means that we do not have...

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

**A voice:** The things we have to listen to!

**Mr. Rémillard:** ...to come before you today. There are 10 of us here, and we feel that we represent the Liberal Party's parliamentary wing and that our views are close to the thinking of the Liberal Party of Québec, the party of Jean Lesage, the "masters in our own house" party, which has probably never held as much meaning as it does now. Mr. Chairman, if we had done otherwise, if we had come here, we believe that

somehow we would have committed an abuse of democracy. I am not saying that this is the case at present, because I think that it may be useful to listen to you, but, in our case, I think it was useless.

Mr. Chairman, it is interesting to meet with people with such conviction. Mr. Landry, I want to pay tribute to you. It is nothing new...

**Mr. Landry:** That does not reassure me!

**Mr. Rémillard:** ...that you have strong convictions about your positions, and I appreciated the way you demonstrated all that conviction, and Heaven knows you need a lot, since time flies, to go into all your ridings and your riding associations, convincing your people of the right route to follow. You do it with a lot of conviction, and I want to pay tribute to you.

Mr. Landry, while on that route, in the last elections, you proposed a series of referendums to achieve sovereignty, having in mind, we suppose, certain competences that you would like to share with the federal government, others that you would like Québec to have. Therefore, there was a spirit of openness that was perhaps subsequent to your perception of the "beau risque" outlined here in this blue book, in May 1985, if my memory serves me. Then, when the last elections came along, you proposed a series of referendums. But now, if I understand correctly, and that is what I want to do, to have your position clearly understood, it seems that you have changed your route towards sovereignty. You now seem to be referring more to a solemn declaration by the National Assembly, following the elections. In fact, here, if you will, I am going to have you dream for a few moments. Close your eyes! Your party is elected to form the government at the National Assembly. What do you do?

**Mr. Landry:** Thank you, Mr. Rémillard, for paying me tribute. I too, in turn, am going to pay you a vibrant tribute. It is largely because of you that we no longer need to hold successive referendums, with the Meech Lake catastrophe and what it taught us, which opened the eyes of a lot of people. You did us and Québec an immeasurable service. You had, allow me to say, almost as much educational impact as the great René Lévesque himself.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Thank you, thank you!

**Mr. Landry:** So, it cannot be said...

**Mr. Rémillard:** In my opinion, René Lévesque is a great democrat.

**Mr. Landry:** Mr. Minister, it cannot be said that our exchanges are starting off in a less than generous way!

**Mr. Rémillard:** Absolutely not! And it has always been that way!

**Mr. Landry:** And it will remain that way, I assure you. You spoke of dreaming. I will point out to you that, more and more, my dreams are beginning to resemble reality, and, more and more, your reality is looking like dreams. I think that we are closer to our objective than you to yours, even though we do not know exactly what it is. For instance, I would like to have the video that your political group shows to all its members in order to make them reflect on the question brought in as an exhibit before the Commission.

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

**Mr. Rémillard:** Yes, but please answer my question.

**Mr. Landry:** That would be a good suggestion.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Would it be... I would really like you to answer my question.

**Mr. Landry:** If it is well done, perhaps the Chairmen and everyone here would like to see it. As...

**Mr. Rémillard:** But...

**Mr. Landry:** ...to the response to the question, you already know why we will no longer need successive referendums to help us put negotiating pressure on the Canadian government, since that was really what it came down to. You applied pressure yourselves. You solved that problem yourselves. So how can we expect Québec to democratically attain sovereignty? First by a referendum that your party would organize, with a clear question on the trilogy, and for which you would have our support. That is one way. If you do not...  
(12:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Rémillard:** What would that question be, Mr. Landry? Would you allow me to ask you some questions? What would that question be, that you would like to put to Quebecers?

**Mr. Landry:** It would be: Do you want Québec to be a sovereign, full-fledged, recognized country?

**Mr. Rémillard:** Period.

**Mr. Landry:** That would be a good question, or variations that were just as clear and straightforward, I leave it to your discretion. If you have a better way of putting it, I would be delighted, provided that the trilogy were there, provided that there was no ambiguity either for

people with a Ph.D. in political science or for those without, and, fortunately, the second group is larger!

**Mr. Rémillard:** So, should this referendum be held as soon as possible, in your opinion?

**Mr. Landry:** Well, you finish your work, and the secretary and the... can tell you better than I when it will be finished, when the ideas will be clear. This admirable Commission must really be given the time to perform its task, and, afterwards, it is you who are the government. You do not usually consult us on your timetable. So, we suggest as quickly as possible, as our militants, by the way, do for us. They are in a hurry. Because on this point our militants are unanimous and the little disagreements we have in public (and, for a political group, this is a point of pride, I tell you, I would not like our business to be conducted in camera; you have the right to make your own choice) the little disagreements we have in public are not over whether Québec should be sovereign or not, but over the timetable for achieving this. I am going to tell you what the Party president and I and almost all of our MNA's and leaders propose.

We propose that, when our political group regains power, which will inevitably occur, it have a declaration of intent voted upon by this Assembly, something like the well-known bill of exchange we call a letter of intent. That means that it is not irrevocable, but that it gives a clear direction. Armed with this letter of intent, discussions, not on sovereignty, which is not negotiable, but on the harmonious accession to new economic associations, begin with the Canadian government. They will go well; morally speaking, I believe they probably will. It has been said, I said it in response to other questions, this association is in their interest as much as ours, if not more in theirs, and I believe that it will go well. If it goes well, we let things take their course, we have a system, and we will propose sovereignty, in the clear question that I mentioned, by means of a referendum to be voted by the Québec people.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Is this a second referendum or...

**Mr. Landry:** No, no. The first would not be a referendum. It is the night when we count the seats in this Assembly and we have more than you. Some years you have more, and that year we will have more. When we are in power...

**Mr. Rémillard:** Yes, but is it not a referendum? Are you saying that it is not an election by referendum?

**Mr. Landry:** No, it is not an election by referendum. It is an election of a Québec

government committed, because for 20 years it has been militantly in favour of sovereignty, to putting a declaration of intent to the vote.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Yes, but I simply want to understand you.

**Mr. Landry:** But if you are not following my process! Not once have you have let me finish.

**Mr. Rémillard:** If you...

**Mr. Landry:** Would you please...

**Mr. Rémillard:** All right, since we do not have much time. I would simply like to try to understand you.

**Mr. Landry:** Could you let me finish developing it? I said: election, vote on a declaration of intent, discussion. Either they are fruitful or they are not. Whether they are or not, a referendum with a clear question to seek the support of the Québec people in order to declare the sovereignty of Québec.

**Mr. Rémillard:** I have no further questions to ask you, Sir. I think that is all for me.

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

**Mr. Dauphin:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to return to the federal debt, which, I believe, is close to \$ 400 000 000 000. You tell us, on page 19 of the brief, that, clearly, if there is disagreement, still in the event of a sovereign Québec, between Québec and the rest of Canada, that the Vienna Convention provides for arbitration, or that an international organization could look into it. Could you elaborate further on this, or do we have examples, for obviously this is not common, it does not happen every day, of where this type of eventuality could occur?

**Mr. Landry:** International jurisprudence is based on examples, that is clear. Over the past century, there have probably been about a hundred analogous cases. This has occurred in the West with smaller enclaves and territories: Alsace, Lorraine, Trieste; there were Sweden and Norway. There is an entire international jurisprudence for those cases. There were many in the third world, of course, with the accession to sovereignty by about a hundred countries since World War II. But the heart of the matter is that one does not found a new country by running off with the till. For 125 years, we have lived the Canadian adventure. This experience has become quite impecunious and, as you stated, a debt to the tune of \$ 400 000 000 000 has

been accumulated. We will have to take on our fair share of the liabilities as well as the assets. The sovereign State of Québec is going to claim its part of the Canadian government's assets, which are the counterpart of the debt.

What will be the key to the distribution? Personally, I have always thought, without being a public accountant, that the key would be the proportion of population, but that should be more closely examined by public accountants, I do not deny it, and submitted to international authorities, the way sovereign States do when they have differences among themselves.

**Mr. Dauphin:** When you say that it would be about the equivalent of our proportion of the Canada of today, around one-quarter.

**Mr. Landry:** Without being an expert, I assume it would be about that.

**Mr. Dauphin:** I have a second question, Mr. Chairman, if you will allow me.

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

**Mr. Dauphin:** As regards the political option in your brief, it is, obviously, very clear. In reference to the internal organization of a possibly sovereign Québec, however, I would like to hear your comments. Do you foresee a decentralization of the National Assembly's powers, as certain groups have recommended to us, to give more and more powers to the regions, and, secondly, would you preserve the British parliamentary system?

**Mr. Landry:** The first question, I think the accession of Québec to sovereignty will be an opportune moment to conduct a good, in-depth institutional review. Enormous powers we have never had, not under the French Regime, where these powers were in Versailles or Paris, not under the English Regime, where these powers were in London, not under the Canadian regime, where they were in Ottawa, will converge in this capital. In this structure, enormous powers are symbolically going to be concentrated. I believe this would be a good opportunity to return some of these powers to institutions created by the Québec government, existing institutions, or institution whose powers are expanded in the renovation of our administrative system.

This said, I would be totally opposed to any form of federalism. This will not come as a surprise to you.

**Mr. Dauphin:** If you will allow me, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Landry:** We number six and a half million...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Go ahead, but you have three minutes left.

**Mr. Landry:** In a few years, we will number seven million.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** There is another question for Mr. Benoit.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Do you have any examples, Mr. Landry, of powers that could be decentralized?

**Mr. Landry:** In all Western countries, there are things which have been strongly centralized here and which are given to municipal councils or to school organizations. I really think that it is not within the scope of this Commission to go into detail as to what decentralization should be. But, in my opinion, it is going to be an opportune time to do things such as those you have mentioned.

There was another part to your question: What about British parliamentarism? I believe, and it is a popular option in my party, my colleague Mr. Brassard is much more versed than I in the matter, that it would be in our interest to preserve the essential characteristics of a British parliamentary system, a system with which we are familiar. Did you know that this Parliament is one of the oldest in the world and that, even before Confederation existed, parliamentarism was practised here? I think that before touching that structure, which has its faults but which also has tremendous qualities, I am speaking of structure in the institutional sense of the term, one should think twice.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Thank you. Do we have any time left, Mr. Chairman?

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

**Mr. Dauphin:** One minute. A moment ago, you were speaking, Mr. Landry, still on the assumption of a sovereign Québec adhering to GATT, you seem, for you obviously have a spirit of conviction, convinced that it will be admitted straight away. Have you checked with or consulted any States and been told that there would be no difficulty in this regard?

**Mr. Landry:** That is obvious. It is obvious. Any country with a market economy that internally applies the rules of GATT, and Québec has been applying them since January 1, 1948, is admitted straight away.

The countries which have problems getting in are those which have experienced communist regimes, obviously because, having no cost accounting comparable to ours, they could swamp our markets with products whose prices were

arbitrarily set.

Since Québec has never departed from the market economy, it would be admitted tomorrow. Furthermore, GATT forbids discrimination for political reasons, for ethnic reasons, for racial reasons, and rightly so. When a country practises the rules of GATT and requests admission, it is admitted. I think that there are now 99 countries in GATT. It would be beautifully symbolic if Québec were the one-hundredth.

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

**Mr. Landry:** 101st wouldn't be bad either.

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

**Mr. Brassard:** Mr. Chairman, first of all I am very happy to see that Mr. Landry, like Mr. Parizeau earlier, at the beginning of this sitting, clearly indicated that sovereignty was in no way an idea or project over which we could have, by any stretch of the imagination, a monopoly or exclusive jurisdiction. The concept of sovereignty belongs to everyone, and I think that the FTQ understands this, the Mouvement Desjardins too, and it is important from the outset, as the Commission begins its work, to say to all those who will appear before us not to be afraid of expressing a partisan allegiance or passing for péquistes, if the situation does not suit them, because they support the concept of sovereignty. This should be made clear I think because we must get rid of the idea that simply because one is an adherent of sovereignty, is a sovereignist, one is supporting a political party. I think it is important to mention this because we are going to hear from a lot of people.

They perhaps have the impression that by adhering to sovereignty they are in some way obliged to support a party. This is not so. You have said this very clearly and I think it should be repeated.

My first question, Mr. Landry, concerns economic integration versus political union. More and more the idea is going the rounds in Québec, an idea that several people are trying to make respectable, that if we integrate economically we are in some way obliged to unite politically. This is clearly a reference to the 12 of Europe. They say "look at Europe with its 12 nations. Economic integration is in an advanced stage, and it is going to advance further in the years to come, since monetary union is also being tried. Look at this Europe. Advanced economic integration, and they are talking about moving towards political union". There are even some who say that the 12 are moving closer to federalism.

I would like to hear you on this question. Is it the case that this instance of economic

integration, the most advanced possible in today's world, obliges the countries involved to enter an equally strong and substantial political union?

**Mr. Landry:** It is the opposite that actually happens. If we look at Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, we see that what people have decided, in light of the experiences of the past century, is that for economic cooperation to be organized on solid, durable bases, national autonomies have to be respected. With all due respect, those who draw a negative parallel between Québec sovereignty and European integration have not done their homework or are knowingly deceiving people. Let me give you a few figures. There are 330 000 000 people in the European Economic Community. If what these people say were true this would be a superpower economically. Now, the entire Community, with all its functionaries, has only a fraction of the budget of the Canadian government, and Canada is a country with only 25 000 000 inhabitants, a minute fraction on the order of, say, 10 000 000 000 out of 150 000 000 000. There is therefore no parallel possible.

Furthermore, we should listen to the men of the European Community, or the women, because there is one in particular who is outspoken on this matter. But even Mr. Fabius, president of the Assemblée nationale of France, who visited us last week, stressed that this very advanced economic cooperation, with respect for the Four Freedoms, was not directed against national sovereignty but was rather based on it. Europe is governed by a council of ministers, ministers of the sovereign states that make it up, who meet in Brussels and who have their own special fields. If agriculture is on the agenda, the ministers of agriculture are there. And when they have finished discussing this item, the ministers of industry and commerce come in. These are sovereign nations. As for the European Parliament, without wanting to be offensive, we have seen how it behaved in two cases that concern us. One was the business of the seal hunt and the other the Amerindian affair. I think at that time everyone became aware that it had neither the responsibilities nor the instruments that could be compared to those of the parliament of a sovereign State.

**Mr. Brassard:** Mr. Chairman, my second question has to do with federal public employees who work in Québec. This is in connection with Mr. Beaudry's question earlier. My understanding is, and this is confirmed by a study by Mr. Saint-Germain on the subject, that a sovereign Québec would have little difficulty in integrating federal employees into the Québec public service and that, according to Mr. Saint-Germain's study, which you mentioned earlier as well, we would need more of them. There are not enough of

them. This means, and I quote from the study: "Québec has the financial and human resources to cope with a complete transfer of jurisdiction for federal employees, for the number of federal employees residing in Québec and their remuneration are lower in proportion to Québec's share of the population and the national revenue of Canada". We do not have our share of research and development either. We do not have our share in many areas, and that applies to the federal public service. This will pose no major problem, integrating these employees, in the event that Québec becomes sovereign.

**Mr. Landry:** That is correct. Moreover, the present Liberal government has provided us, if I may say so, with a marvelous little laboratory for experimenting with such a transfer. The tie-in of the GST, as I understand it, means the transfer of 500 federal employees to the Québec administration. This is what we can call a beautiful little pilot project. I suppose that all questions having to do with collective agreements will be settled, and all those problems of transferring people to jobs with the same status and the same pay.

As for what you said about a lack of jobs in the present federal public service, considering our numbers in Canada, that should be of comfort to Mr. Beaudry as well. We are under-represented in the federal public service. Then, with what I have said, the assurances I have given you, you have an additional guarantee, mathematically speaking, that the State of Québec will be able to concentrate in the Québec Outaouais region a number of employees equal to or greater than the federal employees who already live there.

**Voice:** Mr. Parizeau said the opposite on Thursday.

**Mr. Landry:** If I appear to contradict Mr. Parizeau it would be the first time in my life. So do me the service of explaining how.

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

**Voice:** Read Thursday's Journal of Debates, page 144.

**Mr. Holden:** Mr. Chairman, Mr. Landry, when I was young you were called a "Canadien" and I was called English. Now your Leader, Mr. Parizeau, says that "we are you". As he puts it, the English are "us". Others say that a Quebecer is someone who lives in Québec and who loves it enough to call it homeland. Could you give me your definition of a Quebecer?

**Mr. Landry:** The last one you gave, Mr. Holden, is mine. I have used it several times and

I take it from a circumlocution a little like the one used often by Mr. René Lévesque. All these hyphens have done much harm and are becoming impractical. For example, I have a Polish friend and colleague at UQAM. He is also a Jew and a true Quebecer. Am I supposed to use two hyphens every time I mention him? There is only one suitable word, Quebecer. It applies to every person living on this territory and who loves it sufficiently to consider it his country. Why did I add that phrase? Because I believe that when one lives in a community, but has no legal obligation towards it, one has at least, in petto, the moral obligation to consider oneself a member of that community. In any case, good sense dictates this, and there are good definitions in the Civil Code that support good sense. It means, among other things, the desire to remain here for good. You know that. Everyone who has lived abroad knows it. There are a number of people here who have lived abroad. I did myself when I was studying. Never for a fraction of a second did I consider myself French. Nor were the French under any illusions, if only because of the accent and the political convictions. Had I wished to make France my homeland, the decision would have been an inner one. I would have given some indication of my belonging; I would have applied for citizenship. Then stewardship follows.

The definition you mentioned, the last one, Mr. Holden, seems to me to be the most generous, the least discriminatory, the most welcoming for men and women who decide to leave their country and come here to live. There is a fairly serious identity problem here, and psychologists will tell you that the identity problems of individuals and peoples are serious. Psychiatrists say that someone who, for example, by accident loses all trace of his civil status, perhaps the registers have been destroyed or something of the sort, becomes profoundly disturbed. The essentials of identity are to know one's name and the name of the men and women who live in Québec and love it sufficiently to consider it their homeland, these are Quebecers.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have a question Mr. Turgeon?

**Mr. Landry:** I would like to add one small thing, Mr. Chairman. The Québec adventure has never been an ethnic adventure. Never, not from the very beginning! The so-called "pure laine" Quebecer is a total myth, and always has been. Not a week goes by without our learning that the Rodrigues, I am thinking of our former colleague, Jean-Guy Rodrigue, are Portuguese, the Robertes are of Viking origin, or the Gélins are Marranos, Jews of Spanish origin, and so on. We have had in our Cabinet, the most nationalist in Québec history, Robert Burns, among others. Pierre-Marc Johnson, son of Daniel Johnson,

former Prime Minister of Québec, had a great grandfather, and Daniel had a father, who spoke no French. Could we find better, more sincere Quebecers who consider Québec their homeland than these two?

It is not an ethnic adventure. It is a great political, cultural and collective adventure.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Do you have a short question, Mr. Holden?

**Mr. Holden:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. An English-Canadian, an English-Quebecer who feels Canada to be his homeland is not a Quebecer?

**Mr. Landry:** He is going to have to make, as I've already said, a wrenching choice. But he will be able to console himself with the fact that he can move about freely...

**Voice:** Ha, ha ha!

**Mr. Landry:** ...and go, for a weekend or a month, where he feels himself most at home. This must be stressed. We are not heading for a restrictive adventure. We are starting on an active search for the Four Freedoms, including the fourth.

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

**Mr. Turgeon:** Yes, briefly, to terminate the discussion, Mr. Chairman. I want to put myself in the shoes of Mr. Holden or Mr. Libman for a moment. And, to read your mind, finally, when one speaks of Québec sovereignty, ipso facto one speaks of Canadian sovereignty, of Canada too.

Since here we often find the Québec-Quebecer point of view, can we be more generous and seek a Canada-Canadian point of view? What, in short, would be some of the advantages to English Canada of allowing Québec to go?

**Mr. Landry:** I think that Confederation has greatly harmed English Canada. I know that my time is almost up Mr. Chairman. Therefore I am going to suggest to you an author and a book that comprehensively answers your question. The book is *The Patriot Game* and the author is Peter Brimelow. He shows that this bad marriage has done enormous harm to the rest of Canada, affectively and from the point of view of identity. It was deprived of its national anthem and its flag was changed, things that some accepted but others found painful. It has been pushed about in a sense. For reasons which are understandable, Canadians wished to build a country, they undertook "a nation-building process" (translator's note: in English in the French transcript), which turned out badly, probably in spite of the good will of both sides.

One of the very worst services rendered to Canada was to accustom each part of the country to offer allegiance to Ottawa for a consideration. Québec asked for money, and got it. But the same day, Manitoba wanted some too. And if Manitoba was getting money Prince Edward Island had to have its share. And when the rest had their share, Ontario said: I am the only one without. So I'll take the rest. This has not helped.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Are you about to read the entire book?

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

**Mr. Landry:** There are some good pages left, Mr. Chairman. I recommend them to you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Parizeau, there are two minutes remaining for your group.

**Mr. Parizeau:** Mr. Chairman, I simply want to return to what Mr. Ouellet said a few moments ago. On the basis of a statement I made to this Commission last week, he tried to make out that there was a contradiction between what I and Mr. Landry said. There is no contradiction. But it does give me the opportunity to make the following point. In answer to Mr. Beaudry's questions, this morning, about what is going to happen to federal government employees generally, and, in particular, those in the Hull region, this is an important matter to which we must give much thought, and not simply offer empty reassurances. We have for long been concerned about this matter. This morning Mr. Landry gave some figures. It is of course highly interesting to know how many positions there will be that can be filled by Québec public employees, working until that moment for the federal government. The question is fairly straightforward as regards the figures, Mr. Saint-Germain's study makes that clear.

What I was talking about last week was the method of integration. That too requires some thought, related to how sovereignty will be implemented. Some forms of integration are easily carried out. Think of the mail service, for example. For all practical purposes, what will happen to postal employees? Probably the colour of their hats will change, that's all, whereas in other cases when services are integrated, there are, so to speak, certain problems arising from the maintenance of acquired rights and collective agreements. I appealed to the FTQ, saying in effect, give us a helping hand in this. In this sense there is no contradiction, but I think that puts the emphasis back on the fact that, as the Commission's work goes on, we shall have not only to question ourselves on the why, but on the how as well.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Boileau, Mr. Landry, thank you. The Commission will resume at 3:30 p.m.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:43 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:33 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Our sitting resumes with the Centrale des syndicats démocratiques. May I remind you that this period will be an hour and a half long, including 10 minutes for the presentation of briefs, 10 minutes for the Chair, 15 minutes for the Government group, 15 minutes for the Official Opposition group and 40 minutes for the members registered with the Chair, each having a maximum of 10 minutes. Mr. Claude Gingras is President of the Centrale des syndicats démocratiques. Would you like to present your colleagues, Mr. Gingras?

**Mr. Gingras:** Yes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Please present your colleagues Mr. Gingras.

#### **Centrale des syndicats démocratiques**

**Mr. Gingras (Claude):** Thank you Mr. Chairman. Messrs. Co-Chairmen, ladies and gentlemen, members of the Commission, allow me to present to you those who have come with me this afternoon to make this presentation in the name of the CSD. On my left, François Vaudreuil, Vice-President of the Centrale; on the extreme left, Catherine Escojdo, head of communications; on my right, Robert Légaré, Secretary of the Centrale; on the extreme right, Louis Tremblay, head of research.

The presentation of the CSD will be short and, for certain of you, probably drastic. The brief you have in your hands is in two parts. In accordance with the decision of the Conseil de direction of the CSD, my presentation will touch upon the first part only, for reasons I will give as I go along. The year 1990 is the 18th of the existence of the CSD. In June 1972, 600 union representatives met to found the CSD under the evocative theme: "It is the beginning of a new era". It was the first time in the history of trade unionism in Québec that workers had founded their own central organization, free of outside influence, meaning that it was distinct from existing organizations.

Two clearly defined basic principles in section 1 of the CSD bylaws are worth mentioning here, since they define the union concept adopted by the 61 000 members of the CSD. First, the members own the CSD and undertake struggles in accordance with the requirements peculiar to the union movement. Second, the CSD

is not a political party and will not become one, because it is a movement of unionized workers whose specific task is trade union combat to assure the collective promotion of the rights and living and working conditions of the members. The CSD therefore affirms that its action is intended to combat any form of worker exploitation, on the part of the State or agitators of whatever stamp, without participating in the activities of political parties or acting as a popular organization. The CSD is completely independent of employer or political power as well as of all political parties. It guards its autonomy jealously against all institutions and social organizations. Our members unequivocally affirm that the CSD has no political bias that might induce it to take a partisan political path. The CSD is free, and will remain so, of all political affiliation. It is for this reason that it supports no political party, whether on the municipal, provincial or Canadian level.

The CSD affirms, however, that it cannot assure the collective advancement of workers without a profound, democratic change in society. The transformation of society must be carried out progressively, in stages whose extent and number will be determined by the workers and the opportunities for action open to them. In this regard, the second part of the brief presents the CSD's main demands, which will be achieved by the genuine democratization of society.

Recognizing personal freedom as the primary and ultimate goal, the CSD has made the struggle against inequality the focus of its daily thought and action. The CSD therefore feels it is imperative to act in such a manner that each component of society will find its true place, while refusing it supremacy, or the right to take the place of society or deny it the freedom that constitutes its very foundation. In short, the CSD condemns and denies the right of any social or political group to subject, dominate or control any other group, for each component must have its place in society.

This reminder of the principles underlying the action of the Centrale since its founding seemed to us necessary to properly indicate the difference. The workers of the CSD chose this Centrale because of its ideology and their belief in certain values that may not be found in other organizations. Democracy and equality of opportunity are the bases of the CSD ideology. From this angle, this Commission, by its nature, is a contradiction of our view of society. In a parliamentary system such as ours, the usual procedure is for the Members, who are elected and therefore answerable to the people, to hear representations from organizations and individuals in the legislative process. For this Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, the situation is very different. The Government has chosen the path of elitism,

supported in this by the Official Opposition. There are as well seats on this hybrid Commission for worthy representatives of a right-thinking society, as though the other provinces and the federal government were supposed to find that Québec society is more democratic, more legitimate and more distinct solely because to the body of elected representatives were added a number of highly placed persons to be the voice of Québec, on the assumption that there is only one.

Parliament is the preferred instrument of the democratic system. The decision to have sitting on a commission members who are not properly elected is therefore a decidedly debatable one. Choosing those who will fill the seats is a decision that indicates they are more representative, more capable of sound judgment, in fact, that they are the best representatives of Québec society. It is to designate the elite that will fashion the Québec of tomorrow. There is the select group, and there are the others. The CSD can only categorically reject this approach, which casts doubt on the legitimacy of this body. The debate over the appointment of the elite group, in addition to being, unfortunately, silly, is a dangerous deviation from the real issue of the future of Québec. If this was the objective of the government, Canada can rest easy. This kind of dilatory strategy is well known in the world of labour relations, and it won't fool the people.

The fact of an organization's having to make its demands before designated, righteous representatives, in this instance the only representatives of society, illustrates the defective nature of this Commission. The selection criterion for union representatives at this table was very probably a numeric one. The Québec of tomorrow will therefore be a Québec of figures rather than a Québec of ideas, which is a disturbing thought if it is indeed the opinion of the Government and the Official Opposition about trade union pluralism. It gives us a glimpse of a sombre future for freedom of association in the Québec of tomorrow. If this cleavage between the elitist group and the others, that is to say between those who are considered to have the ability to formulate recommendations and those who have simply been asked to state their expectations, is a picture of the Québec of tomorrow, grave questions arise. I shall not repeat here the long list of those passed over. I shall confine myself to pointing out that this supposedly representative Commission presents a picture very closely akin to the world of finance, very employer-oriented, remote from social and cultural questions, not at all cosmopolitan and with no hint of the aboriginal element.

The Commission appears to have chosen a path designed to avoid recognition of trade union pluralism and the representation of the



underprivileged. There must be no mistake about the position of the CSD, and I think that this should be made clear. It would have made no difference if we had been asked to sit on this Commission for we would have categorically refused.

If the purpose of this exercise was to unite Quebecers and mobilize their energies for the future, the government has royally deceived itself. How could such a Commission form a veritable common front on Québec's determination with regard to its future? On the contrary, the CSD believes that the Commission's recommendations will either be watered down to please everyone or will illustrate the divisions between the various groups, divisions that have nothing to do with the constitutional question. In the opinion of the CSD, more than ever there is now a need to seek points of convergence, to find a consensus that is broader and more significant than those of the Meech Lake Accord, which suffered a resounding failure and was rejected by Canada.

In the trade union movement, solidarity is a value we uphold daily. We therefore know that to choose is to exclude what runs counter to the coming together for action that is necessary to the advancement and success of any cause. This is why the Commission is on the wrong road; the people alone must decide.

Even before the beginning of the Commission's work, the choice of Chairmen and the movement one step forward and two back, which ended in the appointment of members last June, a plenary meeting of the CSD asked that a referendum be held to allow the people to decide, transparently and democratically, on the political and constitutional future of Québec. The CSD also believes that such a referendum must be held as soon as possible, and any attempt to go over the heads of the people, who alone are capable of determining what is to happen in a matter of this importance, is not acceptable in a democratic society.

(3:45 p.m.)

The entire matter of political power in Québec requires consultation of the people. Whatever happens on the constitutional front, the government will have to return to negotiations with the rest of Canada. We in the trade union movement know that to negotiate and establish a balance of power a solid mandate is required. It is therefore up to all Quebecers to give the government such a mandate by answering a clear question, for the weight of the popular vote cannot be compared, in terms of legitimacy, with reports from the Commission of the elected and the elite.

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

**Mr. Gingras:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. The

CSD therefore believes that this Commission has no role to play in the referendum process that we are advocating. It demands a referendum on the future of Québec in the Canadian federation without delay. With regard to the second part of our brief, we have sent it to the leaders of the political parties represented in the National Assembly. For the CSD, it is clear that the demands of our members regarding the future of Québec are addressed to elected representatives only, as it is they who have to answer to the people for their actions and their choice. We do not recognize the unelected persons sitting on this Commission as having the legitimacy to judge our claims. Our presentation ends here, for we intend to discuss the questions about the society in which we want to live, which must be resolved, with the elected representatives. That is the CSD's message on the occasion of this Commission. As I said in my introduction, you will perhaps judge it harshly, but it constitutes the real beliefs of the members of the CSD.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** May I take it that you are ready to answer questions according to procedure?

**Mr. Gingras:** No. As I indicated, it is only on this part, the one we have just presented, which is in fact the message of the CSD about the position we take on the very legitimacy and makeup of this Commission. We have chosen to discuss with the elected representatives the issues at stake for our society of tomorrow. Therefore, unfortunately...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Good. You understand though that the Commission was created by a statute adopted unanimously by the National Assembly of Québec. The National Assembly represents all democratically elected officers. You must also understand that the laws and rules of the Commission were adopted in a very democratic manner and approved by all of Québec's elected officers. In accordance with procedures, a portion of the questions is reserved for elected members and a portion for those who were not elected. I shall assume that you wish to go by Commission rules. The first question goes to Mrs. Lorraine Page.

**Mr. Gingras:** No, Mr. Chairman, I have told you that we had a message to communicate to you and that as part of our stand, considering that we contest the legitimacy, even though the Government, unanimously, whatever the party in power, and the Opposition, have agreed to the creation of this Commission, we contest its legitimacy, and we do not agree to discuss with it the issues important for Québec. We have chosen rather to do so with society's elected representatives and, to this end, have sent to each political party an account of our demands

for the society in which we wish to live.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I was told by the Secretariat that people have the right to speak. You are free to answer or not. You have the floor Mrs. Pagé.

**Mr. Gingras:** But listen...

**Mrs. Pagé:** I will simply take the floor since I understand I do not have the right to ask questions, since the right to ask a question is bound up with the right to receive an answer. As I have been warned I'll get no answer I'll put no question. I shall merely make an observation. I was very surprised to read, on page 7 of your brief, that Parliament is the only instrument of a democratic system. It is true, you used the expression "preferred instrument", but when I read on to see how this idea unfolds, I find it stands almost alone. I am going to tell you why I am surprised. I am surprised because throughout the world, and in my opinion across time, the democratic trade union movement has always claimed that policy, that the future of people cannot be left to the parties and the politicians. Nevertheless, I noted in the brief, in the second part you did not present, that you made recommendations about the democratic elements of our society. We shall content ourselves with reading them.

**Mr. Gingras:** Thank you for your comments. I now ask permission to leave. I think we have delivered the message that the members wanted delivered to the Commission, and we now intend to continue, within the framework of the representations to be made regarding our view of tomorrow's society with those we believe they concern. I agree that one intervenes to change the status quo, but we are going to do that in the right place with the right persons.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** But Mr. Gingras, by the very fact of your coming before this Commission are you not accepting the rules? I ask you to respect them. We accepted your presence here, and your words; we have certain rules. You are free to answer questions from those you agree to answer, or at least to listen to. Right now, just to show you, there are non-elected groups who will speak first; after that, people representing the Liberal Party and then people representing the Parti québécois. I understand that for the others there will only be comments. When the turn of the Liberal Party comes they will have questions and you will agree to answer them. The same for the Parti québécois.

We cannot make special rules for you. We are managing. That is the way we operate.

**Mr. Gingras:** Yes, but Mr. Chairman, I want

to say that the fact of agreeing to participate in discussions as part of the proposal made to me would be accepting the existence of the Commission, which I am contesting. I cannot therefore continue the discussion.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have agreed because you sent off your brief in proper form.

**Mr. Gingras:** Yes, but it was sent...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** And you have agreed to the rules, and you have come with five representatives.

**Mr. Gingras:** I must tell you that when our brief was sent to you, it was that brief that said very clearly what we thought of the existence of the Commission as such.

In this context, that it is legitimate, if we consider the exercise going on here is not legitimate, then we cannot make representations in this regard. But I think I have a responsibility, and that is to tell you here and now.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** By the very fact that you are here you have agreed. So I give Mr. Ouellet the floor.

**Mr. Gingras:** Well, listen, Mr. Chairman. Please excuse me, and I ask all the members of the Commission to forgive me, I don't wish this to be seen as an insult, but as a very clear stand of the members of the CSD, that for us the representation that was formulated for this Commission ends here. We thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I thank you for coming here to give us your message.

**Mr. Gingras:** Thank you for your patience.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Ladies and gentlemen, I think that the sitting must come to an end. Mr. Larose, you have 30 seconds, no more.

**Mr. Larose:** Mr. Chairman, I think we must, among ourselves, explain a few things. This is a trade union group. I think that its behaviour is an attack on the reputation of the trade union movement and I personally would like to make a few things clear...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Forgive me but, right now we are going to change over to a working sitting. I therefore ask journalists and those who are not Commission members to withdraw.

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:55 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 5:07 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We shall resume our work to receive, for a period of one hour, the Assemblée des évêques. Allow me to remind you of the rules for discussion in hearings lasting one hour. There are 10 minutes allotted for the presentation of a brief, and 25 minutes for members registered with the Chair, each having 5 minutes to speak; these are not members of the Liberal Party or of the Parti québécois. There are 10 minutes allotted for the Government group, 10 minutes for the Official Opposition group and 5 minutes for the Chair.

Then, as I understand it, Mgr. Ouellet, you are... Would you like to present your colleagues?

#### **Assemblée des évêques du Québec**

**Mr. Ouellet (Gilles):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, Mgr. Maurice Couture, Archbishop of Québec, on my right and Mgr. Jean-Claude Turcotte, Archbishop of Montréal, on my left join me this evening in thanking you for your welcome. We represent the Assemblée des évêques du Québec and by appearing here we wish to confirm, in a manner of speaking, our long, rich symbiosis with Québec society. Obviously, we do not expect to reestablish the former status of Christianity, but to share its transformations and explore avenues for the future. Our contribution is also part of the Church's traditional presence and service to the people of Québec.

Without repeating every particular of our brief, we wish to assert that, in the work you are undertaking, it is important to transcend mere constitutional adjustments and political structures in order to define as clearly as possible the basic characteristics of Québec society for the future, every aspect that makes it a distinct society. This is what we agree to call a blueprint for society, a constantly evolving program, even if it were to go through local experiences of time or place, but which already encompasses broad intuitions engendered by the constitutional debate chaired by your Commission.

In the first place, it appears essential that such a blueprint should be able to reconcile economics with social concerns, by making economic power serve human beings. In our opinion, social progress should go hand in hand with economic progress. Economics, it is true, obeys its own laws, but its objectives go further and, in this respect, it must be at the service of human beings and cannot be assessed only in quantitative terms. Experience shows clearly that blind economic forces can but engender social inequalities between strong and weak, rich and poor. Unbridled freedom frequently militates in favour of the strong and the rich and it is only

the moderating action of the State that can restore equity and justice. Furthermore, we are told we are entering a critical economic period. It is not impossible that the difficulties we experience will themselves call for a discussion on values and examination of the type of social organization to be fostered. And in this perspective, in their opening remarks, the two Co-Chairmen of your Commission have already stressed the urgency of meeting certain challenges in the face of a number of new social problems that have emerged or become worse in recent years.

As the first challenge facing Québec's society in the future, our brief points out the importance of ensuring authentic democratic participation, a crucible in which resources and decision-making responsibilities can be shared.

Since the early 1960s, we have shared the dream of a society in which every individual can be fully responsible and exert a real influence on the development of our community. Many attempts have been made: committees of citizens, parents and beneficiaries, regional development commissions, economic summits, regional recreational councils. The difficulties encountered must not make us abandon the objectives sought, since we cannot resign ourselves to a future society in which there are two types of human beings, those who are responsible and those who are not.

In this vein, our brief urges the Commission to study means of decentralizing political power, with a determination to achieve a fair division of powers between the centre and the periphery by taking greater account of the regions in developing our territory. The peripheral regions have a pressing need for a development plan devised in terms of local resources, at the grass roots level, by the persons concerned, and carried out in cooperation with the higher authorities. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has surely shown us the way in establishing rural development as one of the stated political priorities of the European Community, of which we have recently heard so much.

We have also heard a great deal about the distinct society and this evening we are gathered together in its name. It is important for your Commission to outline its main characteristics and we feel these must be inspired by the human and spiritual values that have informed our past and recent history. Therefore, the brief we have submitted emphasizes that the blueprint for society proposed to the people of Québec must be founded on recognized human and spiritual values. And among them, among those that have inspired Québec's development, we can stress the Christian faith and tradition, love of life and of the family, self-affirmation and the will to survive, solidarity with the poor and the community, a taste for nature and joyous

celebration.

And we must not forget another aspect, no less important, but rather more visible this past year, a taste for enterprise and success, as the Chairmen pointed out in their opening addresses. In particular, our people have been profoundly marked by helping one another and standing together. Such values can be presented for tomorrow's society as the ideal means of fostering participation and encouraging responsibility. We have only to think of past initiatives such as the cooperatives, caisses populaires, trade unions, etc. and more recent ones such as the forum on employment, the Fonds de solidarité, community radio and television, and all the services offered by the CLSCs, with the assistance of community or religious groups. In preparing our blueprint, we must not forget the spiritual values of faith and culture rooted in our Judeo-Christian tradition and civilization. Must we be reminded today by a public figure like Gorbachev, as he did when he met the Pope two years ago, that we need spiritual values, that we must have a revolution of the spirit, the sole way, he insisted, that can lead to a new culture and a new political system capable of facing the challenges of our times?

(5:15 p.m.)

In the final analysis, our society can only be built if we scrupulously respect the individual and collective rights of the persons and groups making it up. In the past 20 years, the Québec government has recognized the concern for human rights to a considerable extent by promulgating the Québec Charter of human rights and freedoms and the Charter of the French Language. Other statutes have been enacted to specify the rights of certain categories of persons, more particularly to enable the less fortunate to exercise rights recognized by all and afford them greater protection before the law. These are, we feel, achievements for the Québec of the future. We might hope that other general laws, charters of collective rights, as it were, will in time clarify, for example, the role of culture in our society and affirm the rights of Québec's families. Bill 107 respecting education in Québec is such a law, with some of the values of a charter.

These are the main themes, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, of the brief respectfully submitted by the Assemblée des évêques du Québec. Furthermore, you will find some thoughts on the participation of various minorities in the life and development of the Québec people. We are thinking in particular of the aboriginal peoples and the Anglophone community, but must not neglect our solidarity with the Francophone minorities outside Québec.

In all circumstances, we insist on the importance of living through this difficult phase while paying heed not only to organizations

which naturally have a point of view to put across, but also to the people as a whole, very democratically, leaving no one at all on the outside. And we shall be called upon to live this democratic process as a people, with generosity and a real sense of responsibility, not only vis-à-vis ourselves, but also vis-à-vis the rest of Canada and the international community to which Québec belongs.

Québec bishops have long recognized Québec's right to self-determination. Whatever the constitutional and political orientation democratically adopted with regard to that future, they will steadfastly support it and work to achieve it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mgr. Ouellet. Mr. Rémillard, you have the floor first.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Gentlemen, on behalf of the government I wish to thank you for appearing before us. Thank you for submitting this interesting brief, which we have read attentively. The Church plays an important role in Québec; it always has. If we are still a people today, a distinct society and proud of it, I believe we can refer from many points of view and in many respects to the role the Church has played. There has been a nationalism that has evolved, considerably evolved, there was perhaps a nationalism that was more closed in on ourselves for a certain time. We have now achieved a nationalism that is much more open. Your brief is eloquent testimony to this, when you say that the decision to be made must take into account all Quebecers, irrespective of their origin, race or religion. The only important thing is that men and women, some of whom may have come from the far corners of the world, are here to share a common well-being, and should be able to do so with us. I think that is clear evidence of a much broader nationalism and you may rest assured that we share this point of view.

You take no definitive position with regard to the constitutional status of Québec. However, on page 5 of your brief, you mention, and I quote (Item 12, paragraph 12e): "Such a decentralization would in no way diminish the importance for Québec to pursue, on the Canadian and international scenes, its own role in areas of responsibility more clearly defined in relation to Canada". It seems to me this still subtends a federative system. Am I wrong?

**Mr. Ouellet (Gilles):** Obviously, there are geographical postulates we cannot evade. We are after all in the North American continent and will always have neighbours. It is this geographical reality that underlies what we say in section 12. There are also economic situations, trade that must continue, in some kind of a

North American common market, with the rest of the continent. But I do not believe that this necessarily involves, or rules out, the idea of belonging to or a relationship of a political nature with the rest of Canada.

**Mr. Rémillard:** You suggest in your report, or even hope I should say, that the Commission can arrange things so well that it will give rise in the end to a consensus strong enough for us to consult the people, because, there again, you raise a very important point in your brief. You say that, in the final analysis, it is the people of Québec themselves who must define and choose their constitutional option. Therefore, we must consult them. But you do not say how. Do you have a referendum in mind?

**Mr. Ouellet (Gilles):** We have studied various possibilities, a constitutional election, a constituent assembly or a referendum. These are mechanisms on which we have not been empowered, I think, to pass judgment. These are mechanisms of a political order, and I believe your Commission is here specifically to discover the best means of gathering, as faithfully as possible, the opinions of Quebecers on the major issues we are discussing.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Your brief is a particularly eloquent plea and I must thank you for its respect for the democratic process, which you ask us to observe. In this context, you have not studied whether for example an ordinary election could be sufficient to determine this constitutional status for Québec?

**Mr. Ouellet (Gilles):** No.

**Mr. Turcotte (Jean-Claude):** Well, if I may add something. First, we started with the finding that the mechanisms of this Commission, which has been appointed, enable us to express our opinions to a certain extent. But, it must be acknowledged, only somewhat organized groups that have the means to hire researchers or people like that can appear. Then it seems to us that some mechanism should be found in order to broaden the consultation. Personally, I do not think an election will be enough. And that is why we have spoken of a referendum, estates general or various means, which all offer advantages and disadvantages. However, we trust people who are more competent than ourselves to choose the best means, in view of the context and the circumstances.

**Mr. Rémillard:** So if I understand properly, an election will not be sufficient. It remains for us...

**Mr. Turcotte:** It is a personal opinion, which I do not impose on my colleagues, but I

do not think it would be sufficient.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Chairman, one of my colleagues.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Claire-Hélène Hovington.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. To Mgr. Ouellet specifically, whom I know better than the other two, welcome to this Commission. I have had the opportunity to work with or beside you at a number of important meetings in the Bas Saint-Laurent and Gaspésie regions, as well as at the "Agir et réagir" seminars on regional development in Rimouski. And you were present when the sod was turned for the Matane paper plant. Do you remember? I think you were there, because you have at heart both regional development and job creation which will enhance the quality of life of all citizens in the Bas-Saint-Laurent and Gaspésie. In any event it was very much appreciated in the region.

And, in your brief, on page 2... I think you have divided your brief into three sections if I may express myself in these terms. First you discuss a blueprint for society, then constitutional adjustments and finally conditions for success of such adjustments. And, on page 2, when you talk of a blueprint for society, you say, "The prosperity of recent years has not given rise to the redistribution of wealth we had hoped for" and there is fairly obvious underdevelopment in certain regions. This is an interesting thought, but, in my opinion... I would like you to go a little further and tell the members of the Commission how Québec, which could take back certain levers or powers from the federal level in the interests of decentralization toward the regions, will be able to do so or how far it could go to reduce the regional disparities that affect both persons and regions. How could Québec use the powers that might be decentralized? Could you go a little further in your thinking on this matter?

**Mr. Ouellet (Gilles):** Mrs. Hovington, are you alluding to our meeting, I was going to say the event of June 10, at the Cathedral or to the September meeting...

**Mrs. Hovington:** All our seminars, that's right.

**Mr. Ouellet (Gilles):** "...Agir et réagir", "action and reaction". You no doubt remember, as I do, that we had an intense experience that day, all the grass roots people saying: we have solutions, we would like to have a say in this matter and would like to be able to propose our action plans and not have things that come from too high up parachuted in. We would like to be

at the start of the initiatives taken. It is a little in this sense that, in my presentation, thinking about what we heard at UQAR, in Rimouski, in the course of the "action and reaction" seminar. I had remarked in my notes that areas like Rimouski, the peripheral regions, need a development plan, a new vision of development that starts with the resources of the region, of course, the four main resources as far as the Bas-du-fluve region is concerned, designed at the grass roots by the persons involved. And we have people who wish to embark on this, and really want to pursue this line of thinking and propose development projects for the region, then carry them out in cooperation with the higher authorities. They wish to revamp, I would not say decision-making, but consultation and cooperation, from the bottom up rather than from the top down. This was the impression I had as I heard all the reactions from participants who took the mike that day in Rimouski.

**Mrs. Hovington:** But how, for example, would you see a new constitutional order, a major constitutional change in Québec and in the country? Would it really be useful, and how do you see it, in fighting the poverty and regional underdevelopment we have now? How do you visualize it?

**Mr. Ouellet (Gilles):** If there is a new Québec constitution, I would want it to foster a taste for decentralization. It would already be a great deal if we felt there was a political determination to decentralize. Decentralization has taken place by relocating a particular service or office and the feeling was that people were relocated, but not the decision-making centres.

**Mrs. Hovington:** That was deconcentration rather than real decentralization.

**Mr. Ouellet (Gilles):** Yes, that's right, decentralization of personnel, but not of decision-making. It is in that sense... Finding the proper mechanisms, I think, is far more appropriate for the Areopagus you form here as a Commission than for the bishops of Québec to lay down concrete markers for the steps to be taken. But I am certain that there is some form of power sharing that will be part of the power to decide on the future of our Québec society, especially for the most disadvantaged regions.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The 10 minutes for the Government parliamentary party are now up.

**Mrs. Hovington:** On behalf of the Bas-Saint-Laurent and Gaspésie regions I would like to thank the Assemblée des évêques rapidly for the brief they have presented to the Commission.

It was greatly appreciated.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Blackburn?

(5:30 p.m.)

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. Please allow me first to welcome you in the name of the Official Opposition and tell you we are particularly happy to have you here today. We have appreciated your strong stand on poverty and your fine service to the less fortunate. Your voice, I think we can say, carries great authority today. I think of certain documents and the one that made the greatest impression on me, I believe it was the first of a series on dignity in jeopardy; it was widely used to try to make various agents more aware of the situation. You have made a number of statements that I find... In your closing statement, you say you recognize the people's right to self-determination, and that you will steadfastly support their choices and any choices that are democratically made by Quebecers. I find this is important. It is important that it be said and that it be said among ourselves.

I now come back to your brief and share with you the sense of urgency for a movement toward decentralization. I shall not dwell on the matter. I also come from an outlying region and I too feel that powers should go to the regions. In this respect, Montréal is also a region that is disadvantaged in some of its districts. On page 4 of your brief, you mention a future Québec constitution which should encourage decentralization toward the regions and on the next page, in item 12, you say that such decentralization would in no way diminish the importance for Québec to pursue, on the Canadian and international scenes, its own role. You make those assumptions in the context of a sovereign Québec. I understand, because Québec cannot at present decentralize powers it does not have. Have I understood correctly?

**Mr. Turcotte:** Well, I don't think it is a hypothesis that can be ruled out, far from it, for we leave the choice to the people. But I don't think the intention was to formulate hypotheses. In other words, whatever the choice that Québec makes, because it may also be a choice of a renewed confederation with new powers. At that time, Québec would have to apply itself to playing its role throughout the geographic whole, as Mgr. Ouellet said just now, and exert its influence on the Canadian scene. And it seems to me that is possible whatever the consensus we reach, whether we decide on absolute self-determination or a revision of the agreements that have tied us to pan-Canadianism. This role should also be played on the international scene, as has already been started with great vigour by the governments that have succeeded one another over the past 10 years.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** But do you believe that the federal government's interference with a number of activity sectors crucial to the social and economic development of our regions makes it difficult to decentralize the powers likely to enable them to play a part in their own development? I thought this was how I should read your brief.

**Mr. Turcotte:** I don't think we went into details...

**Mrs. Blackburn:** At such length.

**Mr. Turcotte:** ...so specifically, at any rate.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Then since experience is often highly revealing of the difficulties that can come up, you live in a kind of federation at the Assemblée des évêques. There is a Canadian assembly of bishops and the Québec assembly. And if you were to talk to me a bit about your experiences, and at the same time tell yourself, for I am told that you have succeeded to a certain extent in decentralizing powers to the Assemblée des évêques du Québec. How did this come about?

**Mr. Turcotte:** I worked for five years trying to do so. I am not sure how far I was successful.

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

**Mr. Turcotte:** But let's say the intention was good. True, we experience as a sort of microcosm the same difficulties as we do in our country. Now I must say that we, the bishops of Québec, are recognized as a group, which for historical reasons has formed an organization. Then, perforce, we are a group that sticks together and this causes problems within the Canadian bishops' organization. But I can tell you that I think we bishops have come a long way, and much more rapidly perhaps than the country itself, and that this idea of regionalization (Québec, Ontario, the Maritimes, and the West) has made considerable headway. And it seems to us, at any rate that our intention is to remain as close as we can to our field. And I think the model we are so painfully seeking could, to some advantage, inspire the whole of the country we form, despite the difficulties involved.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** You... Yes?

**Mr. Ouellet (Gilles):** We had... Québec launched the idea of regionalization at the Canadian level. We were fairly successful in selling the idea to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Have you also succeeded in regionalizing any powers? Do you believe it would have been possible if you had been locked into an amendment formula comparable to that governing the Constitution?

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

**Voice:** I find...

**Mrs. Blackburn:** ...total.

**Mr. Couture (Maurice):** Ah, perhaps that's it, yes. I find there are many ifs in your questions.

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

**Mr. Couture:** What I might tell you in general, for instance, and that would confirm what Mgr. Turcotte said, is that we succeeded in operating, in questions of concern to us, much more harmoniously than we might have, not only with regard to political debates, but also when we ourselves have to discuss matters that are somewhat political in nature.

In other words when we have to explain issues to one another, and they have political or social connotations, we have greater difficulty understanding one another than when we have only discussions at our own level. It is not only because the questions bring us closer together. I would say that it is because in our operations at the CCCB, we have fields that are proper to the CCCB and those that are specific to Québec. I myself believe that within our structures, there are duplications or overlapping responsibilities that could easily lead to clashes. I think we have made a fair amount of progress, but we feel the same problem. We feel the problems, but we seem to have settled them better in the operating structure we have adopted. We have managed to eliminate the duplications and overlapping that meant many people were working on and investing in the same projects when we are able to determine and classify them more closely according to whether they belong to the region or the CCCB.

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

**Mr. Brassard:** In your brief and your remarks, you lay great emphasis on the importance of having a fair, genuinely democratic social program. This is how you express yourself in your brief. And at the same time, of course, you say you cannot pronounce judgment on Québec's constitutional status. The people will exercise its right to self-determination and may choose a sovereign State, just as it may choose to remain in a federal framework. But you do not think and you do not believe that choice

will have major, important consequences for, I would say, the implementation of a blueprint for society. The type of social program you can choose, and its implementation or application, will be severely limited if your constitutional option is the federal system. Do you not believe that there is an obvious, direct connection between the choice of constitutional status and the will to incarnate and implement a vision of society?

**Mr. Couture:** In any event, I would like to tell you that it is possible you see a lot through your glasses, and I understand.

**Mr. Brassard:** I'll take them off.

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

**Mr. Couture:** No. But I don't think we wanted to go that far in our thinking. We wanted to say that there are certain values, and we did not touch on them all. But when we have to deliver them to you, probably you with your political option, and all the people can see whether there is the connection you wish to make.

This is the way you see it. It is very possible, but we have not entered into any such reconciliation between a blueprint for society that has particular requirements and any constitutional formula that would lead to a specific political system. Agreed, we did not do that.

**Mr. Brassard:** I merely wish to remind you that you are, I think, active members of the forum on employment and that it unanimously demanded, claimed a number of powers it considered essential to reach the objectives which, when we examine them together, constitute a serious draft for a social program. There is then a real connection between the will to implement a genuine social program and the powers or jurisdictions you intend to assign exclusively to Québec or to Ottawa, or to divide between the two.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The time allowed for the Official Opposition is now up. We go on to the next group. We have 25 minutes and several requests. I would ask you to keep your remarks brief. Mrs. Lorraine Pagé.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Good evening. The brief you have submitted to the Commission is entirely consistent with the concerns recently expressed by the Assemblée des évêques du Québec, particularly with respect to the growing poverty in Québec, the impoverishment of a majority of Quebecers, and I think you have come here today to remind us that above and beyond economic growth, there is social progress, and

above and beyond the economy, there are people and a country. I wish to thank you for that.

Now, I have two questions to ask. The first, since you mention individuals in your brief, you know that individual rights often amount to "might is right" to the detriment of the weak. And so our charters provide for a balance between individual rights and collective rights. I would like to hear further particulars in this regard.

My second question. In reference to page 3 of your brief, you discuss the human and spiritual values that we have inherited from the past, then on page 4, you remind us that our heritage from the past must provide some guidance for the future and, in paragraph 11, you go on to the future Québec constitution. Then, at a time when Québec is becoming increasingly multicultural and, I would say, multi-confessional, how do you see the separation of Church and State in a future Québec constitution, in terms of taking the cultural and confessional evolution of our society into account to guarantee its democratic, pluralist nature?

**Mr. Turcotte:** We'll be here all night!

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

**Mr. Turcotte:** Let me give you a few thoughts. I think your questions are very pertinent, and far from easy to answer. The first, regarding collective and individual rights, I too think, and our brief tried to bring this out, and other texts we have issued show, that we are seeking, with difficulty, some kind of equilibrium between individual and collective rights, because pushed to the limit individual rights favour the mighty, and the others suffer the consequences. So I think we have to find balancing mechanisms and even improve certain charters of rights to ensure respect for collective rights that protect the weak.

In this regard, in a statement we made in 1982, I think, we developed the idea in fair detail and I found, as I reread it just before this meeting, that it too was relevant. And I think that if we have to write a new constitution, individual rights must be included, of course, but they have to be balanced by collective rights. It is the opinion of the majority that must take precedence, and not the opinion of pressure groups, however well organized they are. I believe this is in line with what I was saying just now about the spirit of the brief that calls for a very broad consultation.

In reply to your second question, I do not wish to answer it all, the question of human values. Obviously, we have a very long tradition in Québec, particularly in relation to confessionalism. Should that be an element in our structures? I think the bishops have already



stated that they have a fairly open mind on the matter, which some groups may not share, but that is their democratic right. I do not wish to become embroiled in the Montréal school issue, but I think it is important to remember the bishops left room for a choice. Furthermore, as far as schools are concerned, we have always held that the wishes of the parents, that is, the majority of the parents, should be predominant in this matter. And with Bill 107, it seems we have devised some interesting mechanisms for ascertaining those desires.

Of course, all that will change with the realities of the future. I am very much aware that the multi-ethnic character of Montréal will in coming years extend to the rest of the province, and we will all live through that same experience. But I think we shall have to be careful to provide for mechanisms that, while respecting that future, will also entitle people, when they form a significant majority, to the school they want. We must recognize that certain charters enshrine the right of parents to choose the school they prefer and this involves difficulties with respect to individual rights. We must... I am not an expert in constitutional law, but I think there are people around this table and throughout Québec who are sufficiently competent to do this... find a formula that gives everyone his due, but also allows any sufficiently large group to obtain what it wants.

(5:45 p.m.)

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

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mgr. Ouellet, I, of course, read with much interest and satisfaction, first, your perception of regional social realities, a viewpoint we share, and, second, your position on decentralization, which mirrors our own concerns, on another level obviously, but our convictions are equally staunch. I also thought highly of your image of a society built on a foundation that, I believe, is an essential ingredient in any blueprint that recognizes regional realities. My question deals specifically with this subject. I would like you to elaborate on the feasibility of recognizing this new social structure in a Québec constitution.

**Mr. Ouellet (Gilles):** As I asked a moment ago, how can these structures be embodied in a Québec constitution? I am not qualified to answer. What I could... What our brief seeks to point out in particular is that there is a goal to be achieved, which is to work toward decentralization or to ensure better participation by the grass roots in decisions concerning them. I believe that we are seeing a major trend take shape. How will the goal be reached? Since I am not a constitutional expert, it is difficult for me to say. In my purely personal opinion, one way would be that suggested in the Pépin-Robarts

Report, that, at a given time, to reconcile the regions and to give them a say in matters, there be a sort of senate in which the regions are equally represented. I do not know whether it should be a triple E senate of the type advocated in other contexts, but this is perhaps the sort of mechanism that would enable the grass roots and the outlying regions to have their say from a political standpoint. You know, even recently, there has been talk in my region about whether we would keep all the MNAs we have. Over the years, because the population has declined, we have lost one or two MNAs in Eastern Québec. We feel we are losing a say in matters. If there is a new Québec constitution, it must contain mechanisms that represent the wishes of the people, but that also take the concerns, the anxieties and the hopes of the regions into consideration. How? I believe we have enough wisdom around this table to find solutions.

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

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

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mgr. Ouellet, I believe that, in the final report of this Commission and in its acceptance by the rest of Canada, or in the redefinition of our province, the true criterion, the "game-breaker" (translator's note: in English in the French transcript), as we say in English, will not necessarily be Québec's desire for full control over manpower or immigration. It will be, as you say on page 5 of your brief, "a balance between the rights of some and the rights of others". The Meech Lake Accord did not really fail because of decentralized powers, but because of the relation between the distinct society and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. When you speak of a balance between the majority and minorities, section 1 of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms favours the promotion and protection of the language of the majority, collective rights if you will, but it does not tip the balance in favour of the protection of minority rights. The reason I mention this and the reason I am here is that linguistic tension in Québec is the result of use of the "notwithstanding" clause by the Québec government to suspend these individual rights. It tipped the balance you mentioned in your brief. When you say on page 6 that the place... I am coming to my question, Mr. Chairman. When you say on page 6 that the status and rights of Québec's Anglophones must be clearly defined, if there is a Québec constitution do you believe that, to protect the French language and culture, we will not need better, more positive ways than override clauses to maintain the balance?

**Mr. Ouellet (Gilles):** Obviously, since we are

still looking for a balance. The Charter of the French language has tried to establish this balance. It has perhaps been unsuccessful in the opinion of some Quebecers.

**Mr. Libman:** But since...

**Mr. Ouellet (Gilles):** I still believe that the rights of the majority must continue to be respected.

**Mr. Libman:** Then don't you think that we are seeking a balance in section 1 of our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which says, which provides for collective rights but within the reasonable limits of a free and democratic society? Don't you think that is the balance? Isn't section 1 of our Charter the balance we are looking for?

**Mr. Ouellet (Gilles):** I would have to have the text in front of me to give you an answer. What we are looking for here is a principle rather than a balance, and it will undoubtedly change over the years because, I imagine, some things will have to be reviewed. In fact, our French language charter is the third one we have had in the past 15 or 20 years. Balances have to be struck, but the Francophone majority does have a right to guarantee its identity. I personally feel that, once Québec has been clearly defined, many of the fears will fade away because Québec is itself a minority in a much larger population. Consequently, there is an imbalance now between integration into this very large Anglophone country and a Francophone minority in Québec, and small minorities elsewhere in Canada. Perhaps if Québec were better defined, in one way or another, in relation to the whole of Canada, then it would have the self-assurance to find the balance you would like to establish between the Anglophone and Francophone communities of Québec. I have nothing more to add on this point.

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

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Mr. Chairman. I feel I should be addressing you as my dear brothers...

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

**Mr. Ouellet (Gilles):** Come on, let us be...

**Mr. d'Anjou:** I almost said it.

**Voice:** That's for sure, he's one of my diocesans.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** You partially answered another question in showing an openness toward linguistic school boards. You also referred to Bill

107, which is really a charter of education to a certain extent, but still an ordinary bill of the National Assembly, which can easily be amended. Is it desirable in your opinion, since the Canadian Constitution offers some protection, now being evaluated by the Courts, that an amendment to it or a new Québec constitution offer some protection for the historic education rights of Catholics and Protestants in Québec?

**Mr. Turcotte:** My answer to that is "yes", but I don't know whether it should be in an override clause or by other means. I believe that the "notwithstanding" clause was the civilized way to balance the abuse of individual rights. It is normal to have things like that in any society. In any case, I feel this problem requires study. If the people so wish, I, too, say "yes" because we didn't develop out of thin air. We have a past that is rooted in that.

Furthermore, the clause in the Canadian Constitution provides for the right of dissent, at least according to a number of recent interpretations, which indicate the direction we must take. In any case, we have to find a way, whatever it turns out to be, that does not have to be revamped every two weeks or every six months, but that enables us to keep pace with changing social realities through simple structural modifications. I cannot say how to go about it, but I agree with the principle.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Thank you. That answers my question very well, although I believe that the simplest way to prevent problems in the future is to recognize fundamental rights, religious education and pastoral activities in the school and, at the same time, acknowledge, not what I would call the right of dissent, but the right of exemption, that is, the right of others not to participate in activities of this nature if they do not want to, in short, respect for freedom of conscience. This, too, could be recognized in a charter...

**Mr. Turcotte:** A charter of rights.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** ...or in a constitution. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to say that I am among those who, from the start, have hoped that the groups appearing before us would choose an option, with one major reservation in your regard. I feel that some groups should be kept in reserve, those that can analyse, for the whole of society, the type of problem you have set before us this afternoon.

My question will be a brief one. Firstly,

you establish very clearly that Québec cannot draft its own constitution in a federal State. This sort of set-up exists in the United States. I believe that this is an important confirmation and it is questioned at certain times.

In your second paragraph on page 5, you say, and I think we all agree, that it would be to Québec's advantage to exercise the right of self-determination, firstly, in defining its blueprint for society, and that its citizens would then be able to see what internal powers are required to achieve their political future. Have I understood correctly, and I am not asking you to take a political stand, that there are really two steps in your thesis, first and foremost, a blueprint for society that could turn out to be monumental if we go by what the ACEFs and the CSD said a moment ago. This step would take priority over that of deciding our political status within Canada? Have I understood you correctly in regard to these two aspects of paragraph 13?

**Mr. Couture:** Since you specify a sequence, I am not certain that you should understand the thesis in this way because, although we have not taken a stand regarding a constitutional choice, we do not claim that this is unimportant, that there is no urgency in the matter. In fact, I think we say somewhere that there is urgency. And I feel that, if a blueprint has to be defined, and it is an extremely important element, one that we want to highlight, we do not have to wait for it to be defined in order to draft a constitution, either within Québec, as you say, or a constitution for the country itself. In other words, we did not take a stand in this regard, but we are aware that the matter is urgent. And we feel that, on the basis of what is determined, the blueprint for society may be neglected because so much emphasis has been placed on the economy and the constitutional aspect. Therefore, in coming before you, we have been silent on the subject, not because we fear it but because we want to respect the democratic process. Ours is not an institution that is able to see to this. We represent people and values, but feel that there are other ways for the democratic process to be expressed. However, we think we have important things to say about a blueprint for society and have discussed certain elements of it. But the bishops should not be accused of, let me say, delaying political choices because we want to place great emphasis on a blueprint for society.

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

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Am I correct in saying that, in your opinion, some content has to be injected into the container and, therefore, people who could provide input for a blueprint, whether it is sovereigntist or

federalist, must be drawn to a broader program that encompasses an improvement in the quality of life of everyone from all standpoints? At the same time, if I understood you correctly, for people in your own organization who are experts in wisdom and generosity, if I may put it that way, or charity, as others would say, nothing is insurmountable, and there are, therefore, distinct societies that must go through the process of negotiation, which is not automatically successful, according to what Mgr. Turcotte says.

In this process, because, at one point, there are going to be rendezvous with destiny, including for those who dream of grand programs like a blueprint for society, because, if you are for Québec independence, this is not necessarily for Québec independence. But for us, this is now an essential condition, precisely because we want greater fairness, a better distribution of wealth, and more accountability on the part of local and regional communities. We see a blueprint for society behind all that, but we say that we will not have all this immediately with independence, but that it is a condition for achieving it.

My question is a very simple one. I want to know whether the bishops would feel responsible for calling us to order if we departed from this blueprint and the people were, in fact, not consulted?

**Mr. Ouellet (Gilles):** Definitely.

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you.

**Mr. Couture:** Perhaps not with rifle butts.

**Mr. Larose:** No, that's not in fashion anymore.

**Mr. Couture:** No, it isn't. But we certainly won't stand there like dumb dogs, to use St. Paul's expression.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Well, that's it. The time allotted us is over. We resume at 7 p.m. Contrary to what I said this morning, we start again at 7 p.m., and Mgr. Gilles Ouellet, Mgr. Maurice Couture, and my bishop, Jean-Claude Turcotte, thank you for taking the time to reflect with us on the future of Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 6:04 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:10 p.m.)

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

This evening at 7 p.m., we are running a little late, we will hear the Conseil du statut de la femme for an hour and a half and, at 8:30 p.m., the Conseil des affaires sociales for

one hour. The sitting will end at 9:30 p.m. and I repeat that the bus will leave at 10 p.m. from door 6.

I would like to make a comment before we begin. I want to point out to the members that they may not cite passages from briefs that have not been presented because they would be breaking the embargo. I also ask journalists and organizations to comply with the embargo. Organizations should not distribute their briefs before they are heard by the Commission. There is an embargo on all briefs of groups that have not yet been heard by the Commission and an embargo on all quotes from briefs.

I understand that Mrs. Lavigne will now speak. Mrs. Lavigne, would you introduce your colleagues?

#### Conseil du statut de la femme

**Mrs. Lavigne (Marie):** Yes, Mr. Chairman. Let me introduce, on my right, Mrs. Christine Marchildon, who is a member of the Conseil du statut de la femme and First Vice-President, Human Resources, of the Fédération des caisses populaires Desjardins de Montréal et de l'Ouest-du-Québec. To her right is Me Jocelyne Olivier, Secretary General of the Conseil du statut de la femme, and Me Guylaine Bérubé, attorney for the Conseil du statut de la femme.

On my left is Mrs. Hélène Tremblay, a member of the Conseil and vice-rector for education and research at the Université du Québec à Rimouski, and Mrs. Francine Lepage, an economist with the Conseil.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Lavigne, you will have 10 minutes to present your brief. There will then be 15 minutes for questions and comments from the Government parliamentary group, 15 minutes for the Official Opposition parliamentary group, 40 minutes for the other members registered with the Chair and 10 minutes for the Chair. You now have 10 minutes to present your brief.

**Mrs. Lavigne:** Thank you. Mr. Chairman, commissioners. I thank you for giving the Conseil du statut de la femme an opportunity to express its point of view as part of your work. The Conseil is a body, created in 1973, whose mandate is to advise the Québec government on any matter related to the equality of women and respect for their rights.

The members of the Conseil are appointed by the government on the recommendation of various milieus, and they come from many regions. Of the four members recommended by women's groups, two are from the cultural communities and one is an aboriginal. Two members are from economic milieus, two from the trade union sector and two from universities. The members of the Conseil therefore form what

could be called a microcosm of women in Québec.

The Conseil does not take a stand on the political status of Québec in the brief it is submitting. It does, however, take positions on aspects it considers fundamental to the rights and status of women. This Commission provides an excellent opportunity to think about how our institutions and our collective choices can be better adapted to contemporary reality. It is far from certain that our institutions have adapted to the present situation of half of the population, that is, women.

Our political institutions were forged by the Fathers of Confederation in 1867 and developed at a time when women were excluded from politics. Even the word "person" in the British North America Act did not include women. Our institutions took shape in an era when so-called public affairs did not encompass the welfare of people. These matters were reserved for private life, which was the woman's balliwick. This gulf between private and public matters characterized Western society for many years. Radical transformations occurred, however, in the 20th century, and the whittling away of traditional private solidarity led States to take on new social functions. The political field broadened considerably, bringing into the public domain what had been considered private or family matters. And women were particularly affected by these transformations. State intervention in social matters, health, education and income security are major political issues for women. This is why they view with anxiety the emergence of certain streams of thought advocating that the State withdraw from the social domain. Women see this as incompatible with contemporary reality, in which the broadening of the State's role is closely tied to changes in the role of families and to the imperatives of achieving equality between women and men.

If, to Québec, the future means that we must adjust to permanent changes in the world economy, it is fundamental that we adapt to changes, which are also permanent, in the economic and social status of individuals. This is particularly important for women, who must be able to count on social solidarity, and economic and social improvements. Any blueprint for the future of Québec must therefore confirm our commitment to building an egalitarian society. It is essential, regardless of the political option chosen by Québec, that equality between men and women and non-discrimination on the basis of sex be guaranteed. This is why we reaffirm in our brief our adherence to the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. It is of the utmost importance that the Charter continue to apply, or that it inspire a future Québec constitutional charter. We recommend that, if a Québec constitution is drafted, fundamental rights and freedoms, notably women's rights to

equality, security and integrity, be entrenched in it. Furthermore, the constitution should this time be drafted by an equal number of women and men.

In regard to the situation of aboriginal women, we recommend that, whatever the outcome of their collective demands, they enjoy the same constitutional guarantees of equality between women and men, if they so wish. In addition, we feel that the review of our constitutional status must provide an opportunity to eliminate the long-standing underrepresentation of women in political institutions. Without a firm determination to correct the situation, women will forever remain a minority. For example, 70 years elapsed before women accounted for 13 % of the MPs in the House of Commons and 50 years went by before they made up 18 % of the Québec National Assembly. At that rate, we may have to wait many decades before parliaments reflect the composition of the population. This is a matter of democratic legitimacy. We therefore recommend that any constitutional change include mechanisms for achieving the equitable representation of women in all political institutions, in public administrations and on the Bench.

Our brief highlights the incoherence and duplication created by the overlapping jurisdictions of the federal and provincial governments. This situation is detrimental to the drafting of general policies aimed at improving the status of women. Many of the demands made by Québec women are related to the various aspects of daily life that have traditionally been within the legislative jurisdiction of the provinces, such as family law, work, health, day care services, vocational training and education. To eliminate the overlapping of action by two levels of government, we favour the exclusive jurisdiction of the Québec government in these sectors. In regard to the sharing of competence, we recommend that Québec have sole jurisdiction over parental leave policy and that, to this end, it repatriate jurisdiction over unemployment insurance contributions for maternity and parental leave, that Québec's female workers be eligible for the protective reassignment program even if they work in corporations under federal jurisdiction, that Québec have legislative jurisdiction over marriage and divorce, that Québec acquire all the instruments needed to draft an income security policy, that policies for day-care services be entirely defined by the Québec government, that the Québec government ensure that women preserve their right to reproductive autonomy and physical integrity, and that it continue to ensure that pregnancy interruption services are offered as part of health services, that all immigrant women, regardless of their family situation or status, have access to linguistic training and, of course, that any change in Québec's status not penalize

women in terms of their rights or in terms of measures and programs from which they now benefit.

In conclusion, we remind the members of this Commission that, if Québec women still live in a system designed by the Fathers of Confederation, the present debate must be inspired by an egalitarian vision of society and must give birth to a two-parent Québec. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mrs. Lavigne. The first to comment will be Mrs. Denise Carrier-Perreault, who, I believe, is Mr. Jacques Léonard's substitute. Mrs. Carrier-Perreault.

**Mrs. Carrier-Perreault:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have read the Conseil's brief. It is an excellent one, substantial, well organized, the type of brief we are used to receiving from the Conseil. Although the Conseil does not take a stand on the status of Québec in its brief, it sheds very clear light on, for example, the disadvantages of double jurisdiction in such fields as parental leave, divorce, etc. I would like to know whether you feel it is still possible for Québec to obtain full jurisdiction in these fields, the ones you listed, without obtaining full sovereignty, or complete possession of full...

**Mrs. Lavigne:** Please. It is clear that the Conseil cannot take a stand on this question. There are, however, all kinds of strategies that a government could envisage. There are certain things that could be done, particularly in regard to the Unemployment Insurance Act. The Act provides for opting out, and there is a possibility, Québec has a history of this, of recovering a number of fields. But, obviously, the difficulties encountered will vary according to the political option selected.

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

**Mrs. Marois:** No, my colleague, Mrs. Harel, wants to speak.

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

**Mrs. Harel:** Thank you. You mentioned the Fathers of Confederation a moment ago. There is a joke making the rounds in my riding that Canada has such a weak Constitution because it only had fathers and not mothers. I don't know whether you've heard it...

**Voice:** That doesn't make for strong children.

**Mrs. Harel:** First of all, I would like to

congratulate you for refusing, in the Meech Lake debate, to share the fears perpetuated by Anglophones about Québec's ability to guarantee equal rights for Québec women. You take up this question again, particularly on page 8 in your brief, and I urge the members of the Commission to read this. Here, you clearly and concisely illustrate diametrically opposed conceptions when you say: "Whereas women in other provinces distrust their provincial governments and adopt national strategies, Québec women first call on the Québec government to improve their social and economic rights". This example alone shows the difference in the behaviour of the two groups. I understand and respect your unwillingness to take a stand, as a government board, on the ideal political status for Québec. But I still expect you to set forth the conditions essential to the drafting of a true policy for the status of women in Québec and would like to hear what you have to say about this.

**Mrs. Lavigne:** OK. We believe, in this regard, that it is extremely important, firstly, to eliminate a whole series of overlapping actions and jurisdictions, actions that depend on spending power in many sectors and that are contradictory or needlessly complicated. Eliminating all this overlapping is an extremely important element.

It is also important to have the mechanisms needed to draft policies that reflect the real needs of the population. Elsewhere in our brief, we say that the jurisdiction best qualified to meet specific needs related to the daily lives of individuals, their relations, their work and their income security is usually the government closest to citizens because situations vary greatly from one location to another. And, as a body, we have affirmed, in both 1980 and 1987, that the Québec government, which, in principle, has the jurisdiction to act in these areas, is in the best position to do so.

**Mrs. Harel:** On page 11 of your brief, you say that, if a constitutional change gave birth to new institutions, you would recommend a number of things. Why have you not envisaged a major political change in favour of sovereignty. You only foresee constitutional change. That surprised me. In fact, I get the impression, throughout your brief, that there is a sort of coexistence in this regard. I don't know whether you realize that our mandate does not deal only with constitutional change but also with the political future of Québec. I would therefore like to hear what you have to say about the declaration, wait a minute, you call it a provision of a declaratory nature, that you would like to see introduced into a charter, a constitution, no, a Québec constitution, I believe. What are you referring to when you say a

provision of a declaratory nature?

**Mrs. Lavigne:** Yes. In the position we took, notably on the matter of representation in institutions, most of the recommendations apply regardless of the constitutional option chosen. And when we talk about institutions, we are always talking about current institutions or those that would be created in a new framework, and we note the importance of having adequate representation mechanisms. As for the declaratory provisions, whatever the political future will be, we believe that, if Québec decides to have a constitution, there are fundamental principles by which a society must be guided, and when we talk about a declaratory provision recognizing an egalitarian society, we are saying that we at least have a consensus as a society, at least that, which is not the same as a whole series of consensuses. It is recognition that women and men are equal, and that everything must be done... and this is why we feel it is important that, as a society, we affirm this principle loud and clear, and that we acquire mechanisms to do so. Regardless of the direction taken, both in the deliberations of this Commission and in the blueprint proposed, this is part and parcel of the basic values that, in 1987, we also identified as belonging to what is known as the distinct society in Québec, which necessarily includes a society that recognizes the equality of men and women as a fundamental principle governing it.

**Mrs. Harel:** Then when you say "regardless of the constitutional option chosen", should we understand "with the exception of the status quo"?

(7:30 p.m.)

**Mrs. Lavigne:** Of course! But that is perhaps the second consensus arrived at several days ago. There have been changes in this regard in our society, and what we have experienced is a reflection of them. This means that we are experiencing confusion, which is negative, and our brief tries to show the negative impact there may be on women, in any case, in some areas. As for the status quo, I believe that the thought we are asked to give to the subject as a society automatically excludes the status quo.

**Mrs. Harel:** Then you are telling us that, apart from the status quo, we should favour the exclusive jurisdiction of the Québec government. You provide us with a list of sectors, notably parental leave, I believe, reform of family law and income security, in which federal spending power must be limited, and you would like to see jurisdiction over family allowances and old age pensions repatriated. You, in fact, hope that Québec will recover the jurisdictions that directly affect the quality of life and the living

conditions of women. Is that it? Because you say that everything now done affects women, such as the overlapping and the inextricable muddles in certain areas. You remind us that, although marriage is under provincial jurisdiction, divorce is under federal jurisdiction, and so on. But I am convinced that, as practical as you are, you don't really believe that, because we ask for it, we will get it, since women asked for a lot for a long time before they got what they now have. Have you thought about the way to go about obtaining these elements, which are essential to a true policy for the status of women?

**Mrs. Lavigne:** I'll let my colleague, Mrs. Tremblay, answer that.

**Mrs. Tremblay (Hélène):** We get the feeling, Mrs. Harel, that you think it would be so much more interesting for the commissioners if an organization took a clear stand on the constitutional future of Québec, except that since... It's obvious. In your position, I think I would react in exactly the same way, but we decided very definitely that to respect our mandate and to be credible as an organization, we had to take a stand in regard to sectors in which we felt we were definitely competent. We know that you would like us to take a stand. That would also tempt us as individuals, but here, we are testifying as representatives of the Conseil and we will not fall into the huge trap you have set for us. We will restrain ourselves. We knew this was coming before we got here. We will restrain ourselves.

In response to the other question, we actually expected that one, too, because we have seen you in the debates, with the syntheses that have been done, and much was said this afternoon, for example, and you know it as well as I do. It is not a simple question, and we have no answer to give you tonight. We realize that, depending on the decisions made about the political future and the status quo, the steps to be taken are quite simple: total sovereignty, if that is chosen, will, in fact, also be quite simple. But between the two it begins to get complicated. I will not tell you the jokes we made this afternoon about the means to be taken because that would be a lack of decorum on our part, but we did not really... We realize that the question is very broad, open and troublesome, but we have no serious position to propose this evening on the mechanisms to be set up. I'm sorry about that.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** OK. We'll come back to that. Mrs. Lorraine Pagé.

**Mrs. Pagé:** I would like to say, first of all, that I am very happy to see you for two reasons. First, because we haven't seen many women at this table today.

**Voice:** And the bishops...

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

**Mrs. Pagé:** We have heard the caisses populaires, political parties, the bishops, but not many women. This is the first reason why I am pleased to see you. The second is that you remind us that a little over half of Québec is female, which is not reflected in the composition of this Commission, among other things. I have three questions to ask you. A few days ago, it was explained to us that the federal system, dual jurisdiction, was the best guarantee we had of protection for rights and freedoms. If I understand your brief correctly, this has not been true in the case of women, particularly in regard to abortion, a first example, and in regard to the francization of immigrant women, a second example, where double jurisdiction has, in fact, deprived these women of their capacity to integrate into our society, of access to the labour market and of their ability to be financially autonomous. My first question is: In your opinion, is the federal system with dual jurisdiction absolutely necessary in guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of women?

My second question. You mentioned a forum consisting of an equal number of women and men to draft the Québec constitution. I would like to hear what you have to say about the mechanism for drafting the Québec constitution according to this criterion of equality between men and women.

My third question. You told us that this should provide an opportunity to eliminate the chronic, traditional underrepresentation of women in all our political institutions. I would like you to specify the mechanisms that you think would make this possible, in addition to the declaration of intent. What means do you envisage?

**Mrs. Lavigne:** In answer to your first question about double jurisdiction, as far as we are concerned, it is clear that, when it is asserted that rights are better protected within a two-level system, the message is that all Western societies with one level of government enjoy fewer rights. However, I'm not sure this is true. We feel that it does not matter whether we are dealing with a one or two-level system of government. It seems to me that we are talking about two unrelated subjects.

As for the question of guarantees. I would like to remind you that the Québec Charter is the most complete charter that exists in Canada, that it was passed by the National Assembly of Québec in 1975 before the Canadian Charter and that, in general, minorities, minority groups and women invoke it more often and with more success to defend their rights than the Canadian Charter. In this respect, I think the question of

a two-level government is a question that... At least up until now, it has not been proved that there is a fundamental difference in rights between the one or the other.

As for setting up machinery to draft a constitution for Québec, this could be done by an elected body composed equally of men and women; the election mechanism would have to ensure that an equal number of men and women from different milieus were on the lists, or, if there is a place of designation, the elected representatives could also designate. This will depend on the path chosen. But above all, we need a strong political stance before we take any action. Machinery will not achieve anything without political drive and determination.

Moreover, with regard to the necessity of doing away with the mechanisms which cause women to be underrepresented, they are legion. A few years ago, a certain type of electoral system was favoured by some, notably with regard to the representation of women in political institutions. There is no type of system that will ensure women are not underrepresented, whether a proportional representation system or our own electoral system or any other system for that matter. Our electoral system is essentially a political party system. To be eligible one must be a member of a political party and adhere to party policy. We feel that political representation must take place for the most part at the level of political parties. Of course, certain mechanisms, certain methods can promote it. Nevertheless, the party system is the basis. Certain countries have tried proportional representation. It was thought at the time that this would help women. But there have been disastrous results either because there were no women on the electoral lists or because they were unwisely placed on the lists.

What we therefore advocate in this regard is that, if thought is given to what kind of electoral system we must have we should reflect on what types of mechanisms would promote this representation and acknowledge that political parties are bound by electoral law to follow certain procedures and to implement a series of mechanisms. However, it is up to the parties to determine what barriers exist from within, because they are manifold and stem from the culture of the parties, and to identify party programs.

As for the other milieus, when appointments are made in organizations, the executive has procedures and should establish clear policies which set out a certain number of objectives to be attained over the years. In regard to the Bench, for instance, the number of women judges could be increased over a given number of years by implementing affirmative action programs. This should be an easy task for we can no longer say, as we could 20 years ago that women are not ready, do not have the training

or experience. We must remember that the reform of the education system dates back more than 20 years and that women now have as much schooling as men.

There are now more women university graduates than men; furthermore, many of them are joining the professional ranks. In Québec, 40 % of the women between 20 and 44 years of age are in the work force. Therefore, we can no longer say they do not have the experience or the community experience. So I think we will have to set an objective and comply with it. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Okay. Mr. Cameron who is the substitute for Mr. Holden. Then it will be Mrs. Monique Simard's turn. Mr. Cameron.

**Mr. Cameron:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. You ended your speech with the words "It is important that the present debate be inspired by an egalitarian vision of society". Je suis plutôt curieux de connaître la portée de cette vision égalitaire. Par «égalitaire», entendez-vous égalitaire en statut? en revenu? en pouvoir? autrement dit, le socialisme? ou voulez-vous dire égalité des droits? Si c'est la première explication, soit l'égalité de statut, je pense que certains pourraient craindre à cause de ce qui est arrivé déjà en un siècle où les gens ont tenté d'instaurer un statut égalitaire par l'intermédiaire de l'État. J'aimerais en plus savoir ce qu'il adviendrait de la question de liberté. Si vous adoptez le deuxième sens, l'égalité des droits, je voudrais savoir si votre argument vaut pour l'égalité des droits en ce qui a trait à la langue parlée par la majorité ou par la minorité au Québec.

**Mrs. Lavigne:** I mean that we should establish an egalitarian society based on a body of rights set down in a constitution or a charter thus providing formal recognition but recognition of what has already been acquired. Furthermore, women in this society would enjoy not only equality but formal equality. Equality in every day life is not yet a reality. We must remember that although women make up 43 % of the work force, on the average, they receive, 65 % of men's salaries. It should be recalled that the majority of poor people are women. We must not forget that violence still exists and that if we want to do away with these inequalities, we must create favourable conditions. The way to do so is to have a series of social measures which will make it possible to redress the economic and social inequalities suffered by women. This is what we mean when we ask that recognition of the inferior historical status of women and the necessity of programs to redress these problems be encouraged in all programs, policies and legislation.



**M. Cameron:** Je pense comprendre votre idée, mais on dirait que vous tenez pour acquis qu'une évolution vers un statut égalitaire va de pair avec l'égalité statistique des hommes et des femmes. Je ne vois pas comment ça peut se faire.

Au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, par exemple, un cheik algérien avait engendré 1600 enfants. Je ne vois pas quelles circonstances ou lois auraient pu étendre le même droit ou privilège de malchance à une personne du sexe féminin. Certains écarts, par exemple entre les indices de l'emploi, du revenu, etc., ne reflètent pas nécessairement une injustice, mais simplement une différence. Pensez-vous qu'il ne devrait même pas y avoir de différences?

**Mrs. Lavigne:** Okay. What matters, I think, is equality, equality in actual fact. It is certain that men and women are not the same, that they have specific characteristics and that, if I have understood your question correctly, I think that... Yes, that's it... And in this regard, taking measures to ensure strict equality would actually lead to inequalities. Telling a pregnant woman in the work force that she is not entitled to maternity leave would be silly and, in practice, a form of discrimination. Apart from the concept of equality, the recognition of specific characteristics and the acknowledgement that men and women do have differences, we now basically live in a society in which, except for the childbearing period and the family role that both men and women must assume, we do not have a choice. The only way for men and women to guarantee the economic security of their families, in most cases, is for both to work. In this respect, we should all strive towards equality in the workplace and in parental responsibilities because we are no longer living in the 17th century.

**Chairman (Jean Campeau):** OK. Mrs. Monique Simard, who is the substitute for Mr. Gérald Larose.

**Mrs. Simard:** This evening, I am starting out my job as substitute with the Conseil du statut de la femme, and I want to reassure you that this is not the only time I will be attending this Commission.

**Voice:** I hope not.

**Mrs. Simard:** I would like to start out by congratulating you on your brief. However, I find it ironic that the Conseil du statut de la femme is presenting a brief today, while this afternoon a bill dealing with parental leave was tabled which grants much less than what you were asking for a few months ago before a parliamentary committee with regard to maternity leave and parental leave. To all intents

and purposes, all that is being proposed is that our legislation be brought into line with the unsatisfactory new federal legislation on unemployment insurance. This said, all of our recommendations aim, almost without exception, at repatriating a certain number of jurisdictions and regulations to Québec. You have argued that it can be done, and you have talked about, among other things, unemployment insurance. However, in certain cases, I would rather hear you talk about the two more substantial recommendations on page 18 of your brief. One of them suggests that Québec acquire all the instruments needed to draft a coherent income security policy, based on a policy of full employment and adapted to the needs of its citizens. Does the Conseil really... and obviously, I entirely endorse this objective... does the Conseil really feel that it is possible to carry out this recommendation in the present context or even if moderate constitutional changes are made, especially as regards the principal economic instruments?

Your other recommendation concerns the rights of women to make decisions regarding their pregnancies. How does the Conseil think it will be able to change the present situation within the existing framework or in a Québec that is not completely sovereign?

**Mrs. Lavigne:** All right. First I'm going to answer the second question regarding the setting up of an integrated comprehensive policy on maternity leave; standards are in fact set in Québec and the legislative framework, too; income replacement is only very partially under the federal government's jurisdiction under the Unemployment Insurance Act in the part dealing with parental leave. In this regard, it would be possible to recover jurisdiction, to the extent permitted by law and, therefore within the present framework. It can be done and is eminently desirable insofar as the unemployment insurance program is basically designed to remedy unemployment. There is a two-week waiting period and income replacement of 60 %, whereas other Québec insurance plans provide income replacement of 90 %. This seems to be somewhat of a paradox in that, because of a lack of coordination, it pays more to have a car accident than to have a child. I think that, as far as formulating a policy is concerned, if we can set up a policy with tripartite financing by the State, the employer and the employee, and with a broad contribution base, it can be done in the present framework.

Now, for the second part of your question, I'm going to let Mrs. Tremblay answer.

**Mrs. Tremblay:** To sum up briefly, you have noticed that our report covers, in more detailed fashion, a number of measures or program policies which exist for different parts of our

general income security policy. We talked about income security in general, financial assistance to support children, fiscal policy with regard to the family, the elderly and so forth. This recommendation was the culmination, perhaps the link with all the remarks made concerning individual programs. What we noticed, as a rule, in all the recommendations, was that we could advocate, if we really wanted, as we have wanted to for a long time on different occasions, a systematic, coherent, structured policy, for example, on guaranteed family income throughout Québec, and if we have had a hard time drafting one, perhaps it has been because in all the programs involved we have had difficulty controlling and obtaining jurisdiction, as you can see when we deal with one program at a time. It is proposed that they be repatriated individually. On the whole, I think we will have to be coherent and draw the necessary conclusions.

**Chairman:** OK.

**Mrs. Simard:** There are two questions you haven't answered. I think that perhaps I did not express myself clearly enough. First with regard to abortion, the right to abortion or the right to interruption of pregnancy. Excuse me, I used the legal term. How do you think women in Québec can be assured of this right in the future? Second, as for the policy of full employment, I would like to hear what you have to say on the subject of full employment. You talk of income security related to a policy of full employment. Do you think that Québec now has or would have with a revised constitutional status the economic means required to set up a policy of full employment?

**Mrs. Lavigne:** OK. The right to interruption of pregnancy and the right to abortion constitute a major problem and we state in our document that we feel that the federal government has stolen, so to speak, a field that falls within our jurisdiction. We feel that it has taken a medical act, which, without any doubt is part of health care and falls under provincial jurisdiction, and insisted on legislating and turning it into a crime. In that regard, therefore, they have infringed our jurisdiction. We set forth the hypothesis, a much more normal one, that the provinces assume their responsibilities in these sectors and encourage management of and access to services. Therefore, the existence of two levels of government and the use of tools which are not used for purposes... means the cause of women's rights has definitely taken a blow. Therefore, in this way... Except that it is difficult to know whether Québec would actually be able to legislate in the present context. If the Act is not approved by the Senate, and I think the statements made have been quite clear

in this regard, the responsibility will go to the provinces, where it should be. We no longer live in the 19th century; abortion should not be in the Criminal Code. Does that answer your question? Yes?

As for a policy of full employment, a society should have certain tools which are, on the one hand, macroeconomic and it is clear that Québec does not possess most of these two types of tools. Furthermore, there are vocational training tools and Québec also lacks many of them. This makes it difficult for Québec, which is still not in possession of the tools it needs.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your time has just run out, Mrs. Simard. It is now Mr. Jacques Proulx's turn and then, immediately after, Mr. Lucien Bouchard and Mr. Ghislain Dufour. Mr. Proulx.

**Mr. Proulx:** Thank you Mr. Chairman, I want to tell you, Madam President, as others already have, that your brief is very interesting and that your presentation this evening is excellent because of its clarity. It is short and to the point. Two short questions. But one brief statement to start off. As a poet once said, some are more equal than others. Do you believe that Québec women are more equal to men than Canadian women?

**Voices:** Ha, ha ha!

**Voice:** Yes.

**Mr. Proulx:** My second question will depend on your answer.

**Mrs. Marchildon (Christine):** I think that what we tried to get across in the brief, Mr. Proulx, was that we consider that Quebecers basically have values and expectations which are different from those of Canadians. And that is why we say that the Québec government should have the necessary powers to formulate policies and programs which reflect these values and needs. This is really what we meant.

**Mr. Proulx:** I can deduce that it is a little more than...

**Mrs. Marchildon:** That depends on expectations, Mr. Proulx.

**Mr. Proulx:** That depends on expectations. But until today...

**Mrs. Marchildon:** Expectations are different.

**Mr. Proulx:** On that basis, seeing that equality of the sexes is fundamental... I think, well I hope that everybody agrees with that for this must be established before going on to other

issues... Don't you believe that the time has come for Québec to become a State or a country?

**Mrs. Marchildon:** We mentioned at the beginning that in our mandate or in the presentation we were making to the Commission, we were taking a look at the fields which affect women in Québec. This is why we have not contemplated the matter from that angle. We don't have any specific answer with regard to that question.

**Mr. Proulx:** Does this mean that you are waiting until the end of the Commission and that you will soon be in a position to take a stand?

**Mrs. Marchildon:** Unless our mandate changes, for the time being...

**Mr. Proulx:** Thank you.

**Mrs. Lavigne:** Listen, I think what we find interesting in this debate, and in that respect the Conseil has contacted several Québec women's groups and sent out documentation, background material, and what is of great importance is that Québec women become involved in this debate. We cannot. Listen, Québec women vary as much as Québec men. It is obvious that all Québec women do not have a single opinion or point of view. It is obvious that there is diversity. I think that it is important that the Conseil stress the points we have in common and what we mentioned I believe is part of a basic consensus of the women of Québec. When constitutional and political options are discussed, it is obvious that women's opinions cover the whole political spectrum. Our role as the Conseil is to point out a certain number of consequences, to consult studies we have conducted over the years, to determine the conditions we think must be met, to pinpoint those elements and especially to make the Commission members aware of the stakes involved.

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

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you. Basically, I think the Commission has a fairly good understanding of what you are trying to do. You have decided to analyse the situation from within, from your point of view and, on the basis of your examination you have concluded that the current situation of overlapping jurisdictions, incoherences, injustices and iniquities is unacceptable. And on this basis, you establish principles, a kind of scale. It is important that an overall approach be used to find a solution to the difficulties involved in promoting the status of women, I think you mention this on

page 39, and that there should be only one level of jurisdiction. And I believe you feel Québec should have this jurisdiction since you say that the integration of the various aspects of a policy on the status of women would prompt the Conseil to advocate the exclusive presence of the Québec government in this sector. You have an additional argument on page 17 which refers to Québec's distinct culture, to the effect that the solution to the problems regarding the status of women must be particular to Québec.  
(8:00 p.m.)

I don't know whether I have read your brief correctly. I understand the difficulty you have in proposing a specific constitutional solution. But it seems to me that you are basically saying that all powers required by the Québec government to impose and find an overall solution for the problems related to the status of women must be repatriated; for example, income security, employment, training, parental rights and so on. The list is very long. Is the Conseil recommending to the Commission that all the powers required to achieve this goal be recovered?

**Mrs. Marchildon:** Insofar as we would like to have an overall policy, a well integrated policy at that level, it is desirable that Québec exercise the maximum amount of power possible in... that all these levers belong to Québec. It is obvious that that would make it a great deal easier to have this integrated, very coherent policy.

**Mr. Bouchard:** I am going to be a bit of a bore by asking you a question you were asked just a while ago, but which obsesses us. Because when you say things like that, you are really giving us an order. What you are really saying is, you are a commission and here is the way the ship will be steered. You are asking us to go and recover those powers. That is what you are asking us to do.

This is a political move, isn't it? We work in politics, on the political blueprint. And whoever talks about politics, talks about concrete means, the possibilities of carrying out the proposed blueprint. I'm sure you've asked yourself this question. You have lived through the situation as all Quebecers have. You know what has happened. You are aware of all the disappointments we have gone through in recent years, the recent events. Do you have anything to say on the subject? Because I understand that you would like to push this chalice away from your lips, but we have it on the table. And when our mandate is to propose recommendations to help draft the blueprint and come up with ways to carry it out, do you have something to tell us that could help us? How would you go about recovering the powers you would like to see repatriated?

**Mrs. Lavigne:** Listen, that basically depends on the choices that are made. That can be done in many ways, but everything depends on the blueprint for society we choose and on what we want to go and get. And I think the strategies will come in the period following the Commission and will necessarily result from the choices proposed and probably from the choices proposed to the Québec society in terms of issues. What kind of society do we want to become and what are we going to keep?

What we would mainly like to say to you is that when, as commission members, you examine the powers one after the other. It may say, and I don't think you will, but you may say: Listen, unemployment insurance causes many problems, why not let the federal government keep it?

And on that point we want to tell you that we think it is important that you keep in mind in your reading that that causes a problem for women, the fact that income compensation is given at the federal level and that there are a multitude of measures. You might say, well, in regard to health and safety in the workplace, it doesn't really matter whether there are two levels of legislation or not. What we want to tell you is to be careful because there is a major problem. There are 120 000 women workers in Québec who might be deprived of protective reassignment because they work in corporations under federal jurisdiction. What we want to tell you is that while you are reflecting on the matter, do not forget that one half of the Québec population is involved and that the consequences of these measures on women are often not the same as they would be on other groups of people.

Therefore, it is basically so that this one time, contrary perhaps to other times, women will not be forgotten.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Do I have a minute left?

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

**Mr. Bouchard:** Madam, you can take it for granted that you have convinced me. Rest assured that you have convinced me that all the powers required to formulate and implement an overall policy for the status of women must be repatriated from Ottawa. Good, now that I have said this, are you telling me that I don't have to worry about strategy? That the strategy will come after the Commission is over, that Mr. Rémiillard as government Minister will take care of it and that it is not the job of the Commission?

**Mrs. Tremblay:** First, I'll tell you the same joke we told this afternoon. You can at least laugh with us. We are going to tell you the same joke we told this afternoon, at least you can laugh even if it does not help you find a

solution. We know that taxation is the sine qua non. And perhaps Quebecers will voluntarily, because the most difficult strategy to implement would be for renewed federalism or sovereignty association, which is in the middle between two extremes... This is the point at which things become difficult because negotiation presupposes two persons who want to negotiate. We suggested that if the Commission arouses some enthusiasm, maybe afterwards Quebecers will spontaneously propose to each other that they send their federal tax returns at the end of the year with the costs, the taxes they have to pay... They could spontaneously decide to send it in to the provincial government, requesting that it send to the federal government that share which the Québec government deems appropriate in proportion to what it wants or does not want to recover. You don't seem to be finding the joke very funny...

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

**Mr. Bouchard:** Because we could keep everything then. I would keep everything for Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your time is over Mr. Bouchard. Mr. Dufour.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I would also like to thank the Conseil du statut de la femme for its thoughts. I would particularly like to take a look at the first two recommendations with you, which we have, in fact, already had an opportunity to discuss. The first one was that Québec should have jurisdiction over parental leave policy. If we refer to the section on the parental leave in the Unemployment Insurance Act, and I imagine that's it, we are in complete agreement. We have already told the Conseil that we agree, and we are even more in agreement now that, as of maybe 15 days or 3 weeks ago, the federal government has not participated in the funding of the program. Therefore, that recovery, as far as we are concerned, would be easy in the present framework. We would not need to be sovereign to recover those powers because as you said so well, Mrs. Lavigne, the government has the power to opt out. I would also like to add that, in regard to the bill which was tabled this afternoon, Bill 97, I give most of the credit to the Conseil du statut de la femme for the 34-week parental leave in Québec; that is a great deal more than you will find in the federal legislation. Therefore, Québec is capable of doing things within the federal framework and I think that we are the province in the forefront in that area. This is due in part to the work of the Conseil du statut de la femme.

And now for my second... and this will be my question. You have just touched on it with

Mr. Bouchard. You say that workers who are pregnant now and whose employer is under federal jurisdiction do not benefit from protective reassignment because that doesn't fall under the Act respecting occupational diseases but under the Act respecting occupational health and safety. The question I am asking you is: The work you have done regarding parental leave in the present context, which has produced what Bill 97 has introduced, is this what you have done, for example, with the *Conseil du statut de la femme* at the federal level, carried out this kind of debate for the actual purpose of covering women who work for corporations under federal jurisdiction governed by the Act respecting occupational health and safety? And what steps have been undertaken to carry out your recommendation number 2, similar to what has been done in regard to recommendation number 1, which has been implemented in part? Of course, it's no Eldorado, and you asked that it be paid, but despite that, the legislation is still the most innovative. So I am asking what the *Conseil* is doing now vis-à-vis its vis-à-vis, whoever it may be, be they Canadians or other provinces?

Mrs. Lavigne: Very well. With respect to your question on protective reassignment, the exclusion of Québec working women under federal jurisdiction is relatively recent. It took place in 1988 and is a recent exclusion; in that respect, it was a Supreme Court decision, if I am not mistaken, which led to the withdrawal. Therefore, in our present context, it would really be up to the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women to make recommendations to the federal government. Making recommendations to the federal government is not part of the *Conseil's* mandate. Our mandate is really in relation to the Québec government. But this question is indeed a subject for concern, and I think that the system in Québec of protective reassignment is a system which is envied by many and one we would like to see applied. The problem confronting us is really the two categories of working women. But, for the moment, I must say that it is not a particularly active issue with us.

Mr. Dufour: Because an employer will be an employer, and because of the federal government, with its Labour Code and its division on health and safety in the workplace, in the present context, it's to be expected that it be that way. I mean, we can't quarrel with that situation. Any one of us being an employer today, in the present context, would be in the same situation. In as much as you have debated, and debated well, the parental leave issue within the unemployment insurance system, I just wanted to check whether you have undertaken... and I think I have my answer. It's no.

Mrs. Lavigne: Nevertheless, if I may clarify, the proposal we tabled with the Québec government would, in some respects, allow working women who are ill or pregnant, that is, with conditions unrelated to health in the workplace, but related to themselves as women (within the framework of the project we presented), to be entitled to compensation, because it provides for fairly broad coverage. Therefore, being eligible for unemployment insurance, being Québec working women, they could possibly find themselves... But, there again, agreements would have to be reached. The system we proposed is one aimed at integrating all working women, regardless of whether they are workers with precarious status, part-time workers, and regardless of the plan they are covered by. And it's a system which could very well incorporate the whole aspect of illnesses and pregnancy time.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. André Ouellet.

Mr. Ouellet (Gilles): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Lavigne, I want to thank you for your brief, and, above all, for many of the recommendations you make, which seem to me to be very pertinent, and which certainly should be taken into account. I am thinking of the suggestions relating to family law, to the taking over of certain powers by the Québec government, enabling it to institute a policy on the family. I subscribe wholeheartedly to these recommendations. My question refers to a comment you make on page 25 of your brief, where you say that the Canadian Charter is not yet, even to this day, the instrument of socioeconomic reform hoped for by many feminist groups in Canada. Could you list the shortcomings as you see them, and what proposals you would make to improve the situation and make the Charter more effective?

Chairman: (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mrs. Lavigne, I would ask you to answer quickly, if possible. Time has run out for this block of questions.

Mrs. Lavigne: Mrs. Olivier will answer.

Mrs. Olivier (Jocelyne): I think one of the shortcomings identified, and, undoubtedly, people have already spoken to you about it, is the fact that under of the Québec Charter, intervention in problems of a personal nature, in private relationships, is possible, whereas the federal Charter is aimed solely at responsibility for rights in relation to laws passed by Parliament. And the analysis on which we base ourselves is one which was done by the Canadian Advisory Council concerning lawsuits heard in the three years following the coming into force of section

15 of the Act. We also say in our brief that certain recent decisions have given us some reason to hope, so to speak, with respect to the interpretation of the Charter; and what we hoped for, what we said in our brief, is the assurance, should a Québec constitution be drawn up, that the rights of women not take a backward step, that the right to equality, security and integrity be guaranteed in the constitutional charter of Québec, if it is drawn up.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** OK?  
**Mrs. Christiane Pelchat:**  
(8:15 p.m.)

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Mrs. Lavigne, women of the Conseil, I, in turn, would like to congratulate you on the quality of your brief, its clarity, above all, and I think I speak for all MNA colleagues present, from the Government as from the Opposition, when I say that we endorse your conclusions that the present debate be inspired by an egalitarian vision of society and give birth to a two-parent Québec; not only do we subscribe to this, but I might add, we are fighting every day for it to become a reality. We don't always win, but, slowly, we gain ground.

Mrs. Pagé and Mr. Ouellet stole my thunder as we say. But I would, nonetheless, like to come back to it because I don't think it is quite clear. Firstly, at the level of double jurisdiction, or at the level of the protection a federation can provide with respect to the rights and freedoms of women or individuals, I would like you to elaborate on these a bit more. Are we, in fact, better protected in a federal government, or in a State where there is only one level of government? And if, indeed, as you say on page 26 of your brief, the Canadian Charter has not served you so well, what makes you think that the "constitutionalization" of the Québec Charter would serve us better?

**Mrs. Lavigne:** Very well. Concerning your first question about the two levels, all rights can be found in the Québec Charter already. The Québec Charter was there first, and it is not... Or it is not when there are two levels of jurisdiction. What is important is the status a charter has, basically. So if we had a State with... And the status came from the scope of a charter of rights. Therefore, what gives weight to the Québec Charter is that it applies not only to the law, as Mrs. Olivier pointed out, but to private relationships between individuals. The greatest number of cases of discrimination are outside the law. Whether it be sexual harassment, discrimination in the workplace or in other milieus, it is experienced outside the law, and that is one of the great strengths of this Charter. What makes a charter strong is its status in relation to other laws. In that sense, it is not a question of having one or two charters, but of its position relative to the body

of laws.

**Mrs. Olivier:** Another point that should perhaps be mentioned with respect to this question is, as Mrs. Lavigne said, status. In addition, however, the introduction of charters should not eliminate the legislator's responsibility. In other words, charters provide for basic rights and establish a framework, but this does not relieve the legislator of the obligation to introduce rights in a practical manner, while sector and other laws, for their part, can spell out rights in the framework of the rights outlined in the constitutional Charter.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** You have avoided the trap several people set for you with respect to constitutional or other status, but I think you explain very clearly the problems of two overlapping jurisdictions. I would like to know if the sharing of powers has more negative effects on Québecers than positive ones.

**Mrs. Lavigne:** Well, listen, I think certain things should be stated clearly. If we look back at what happened in 1945, we have to admit that the federal government was the first to play a welfare state role. On the one hand, it was able to do so because it had the means to do so and, on the other hand, it was encouraged by particularly dynamic sectors in certain parts of Canada or the equivalent where industrial progress was such that government intervention was necessary in the social sector. In other words, we know, in particular, that women have been active in the labour market in Ontario longer than in Québec and that this situation has required social legislation. Therefore, I think that, historically, it can clearly be said that someone acted as initiator, a role which the Québec government could not play since its structure was fairly outmoded. As you recall, it took the Quiet Revolution for us to provide ourselves with the economic development tools needed to allow Québec to start catching up. A positive role has thus been played and, it cannot be denied, important initiatives have been taken in the process. However, we now say: To the extent that, Québec has reached a stage of development where it plays its part, it is normal for the State to do so, we are faced with integration problems. Problems of coherency and harmonization have arisen.

Moreover, since the federal government is faced with numerous financial problems, it also has a tendency to withdraw funding and, by cutting off support for certain programs, it has counteracted Québec government initiatives to a certain extent. Therefore, what we were saying was: At a certain point in Québec's history, it was done and it was probably normal, the federal government occupied a field that several provinces did not, but it is said: the situation

has changed radically. Contemporary Québec is not what it was in the forties and fifties and it is important that we take act, adjust and clarify. It's impossible for two of us to always cultivate the same garden. This does not produce nice vegetables, and I think many young shoots get crushed. It's in this sense that I think the time has come for a comprehensive review of the situation, simply because times have changed.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We will now hear from Mrs. Trépanier, who is substituting for Mr. Rémillard.

**Mrs. Trépanier:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I in turn would like to thank the Conseil du statut de la femme for its brief. There's no need to say how important the participation of the women of Québec is in the deliberations of this Commission. The stakes with regard to the status of women are extremely important, whether we think of the sharing of jurisdictions, spending power - and I immediately think of an area for which I am responsible in the Québec government, namely day care services - job development, occupational training, and the whole question of financial support for families. Allow me to mention that we tabled today, as Mrs. Simard said earlier, a bill respecting minimum labour standards, a bill on which the Conseil du statut de la femme has done an enormous amount of work. A number of solutions to various problems, in quotation marks, are proposed in this bill. I can say that, if it is passed, it will help to introduce a parental leave policy which is perhaps the most advantageous in Canada. This is a first step. The next step should perhaps be income replacement. You have already proposed very interesting measures in this regard, which you discussed a bit earlier.

I would therefore like to thank the members of the Conseil du statut de la femme not only for the brief they presented today, but also for the impetus they have given to the work of this Commission, for the way in which they have encouraged women's groups from the various regions of Québec to present their viewpoint here. I would also like to thank you for being the advisory body you are and the initiator, on many occasions, of various government policies. Thank you ladies.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mrs. Trépanier. Yes, go ahead, Mrs. Pelchat.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Mrs. Lavigne, I think that, earlier, you briefly discussed the electoral system and women's access to politics. You said that changing the electoral system would not necessarily give women more access to politics. I would like you to tell me how you think political

parties could improve their systems so as to ensure there are more women candidates; for I must tell you that, during the last election, we formed a committee to encourage women to come forward as candidates, and I can tell you that it was no easy task. There are still only 23 women in the National Assembly. It's a start, but it's still not good enough.

**Mrs. Lavigne:** Listen, I think that, first and foremost, political parties must have clear policies and people must be made to feel welcome. All interviews on this subject with women in politics also bring out how hard it is, how... Even if a woman is in politics, even if she is a minister, how she is always regarded as special, marginal or different. This isn't normal, and I think that campaigns should be conducted within the various parties to make their members aware of this situation and to ensure that the attitudes of political parties at least are on a par with those of voters. That's the problem. The electorate no longer makes a distinction between men and women. Women are just as successful as men. The difference is that...

**Mrs. Pelchat:** I would like to interrupt you.

**Mrs. Lavigne:** Yes.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** I would like to interrupt you. Are you saying that political parties make a distinction in this regard?

**Mrs. Lavigne:** What I said was that objectives are always set and that means that it's... The fact is that, in political parties, people are not sure. They never ask themselves whether they are going to run a man in a particular riding. Instead, they ask themselves whether or not people will vote for a woman. As for the behaviour of voters... Québec men and women are absolutely nonsexist in this regard. It's perhaps merely out of habit that political parties still ask themselves this question about the electorate. The voters themselves, in any case, whether male or female, are not sexist. I think that we must understand that attitudes change and that objectives should be set. For example, we know that, at present, women represent 49% of Liberal Party members. However, they make up only 18% of the Party's executive. As for the Parti québécois, women represent 42% of its members and 29% of the executive. This in itself is very surprising. Party membership is divided almost equally between men and women and, yet, they don't think of running women candidates. These are the questions that arise within political parties. If we only stated, or had a rule that simply stated, that there must be proportional representation in the membership... It's 49% of... Since candidates are chosen from party members, I think that Québec's image would

change drastically in this regard if political parties selected candidates solely on the basis of proportional representation.

There are also, I think, questions related to pre-election campaigns which are important, questions of pre-election campaign funding, support funds and... Because the Election Act provides for campaign funding, but in pre-election campaigns, there are issues and many women... Oh, their income is always lower than men's and they do not belong to the economic networks that facilitate pre-election campaign funding. Women can run into problems in this area and I think that political parties should be attentive and create structures that are favourable to them. Above all, I think that political parties must look at what should be done internally, because, in addition, certain procedures are not necessary. Finishing a sitting... We always ask ourselves the same question: What's the point of finishing a sitting at 5:30 a.m. and waking up a minister at 4:00 a.m. to tell him he has to come and sit? It seems to me, in any case, that the basics of human resources organization... For anyone who has taken management courses, it's time management that counts. I think that, increasingly, both men and women in politics have family obligations as well, and that we want to have men who play a variety of roles. If we also want young fathers to enter politics, and not grandfathers, it's important to introduce measures that meet families' needs. In this sense, there is also a need for serious reflection on the organization of political life. What we are saying is that this has not been done and that the various political parties are certainly capable of finding ways to do it if they want to.

**Mrs. Peichat:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** All right? Mr. Poissant, if you agree not to talk about Matane, you may have the floor for two minutes.

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

**Mr. Poissant:** I would like to congratulate you, Mrs. Lavigne. You said earlier, in your introduction, that it takes a long time for women to obtain top-level positions. Allow me to say that, as businessmen, it has taken us 30 years to carve out a place for ourselves in the Québec economy. And if we are lucky... I hope it will take you much less time than it has taken us. But now we have taken our rightful place, and I must say that I, for one, strive to ensure that women obtain top-level positions, and have done so in other fields in the past. I would like to ask you a question, however. What is the attitude of the Conseil du statut de la femme towards mothers who stay at home? Today, this

evening, many women are listening to you. Do you believe that a woman's role should be strictly professional or economic or related to social affairs? In my opinion, women's role as mothers in the home is just as important. I was going to ask you a related question: Do you have statistics, for example, on the character of children in families where mothers work? It's not only the mother's responsibility, mind you; it can also be the father's. But do you have statistics on this subject and on changes that have taken place over the past 25, 20 or 10 years? Moreover, what is the current situation today? (8:30 p.m.)

**Mrs. Lavigne:** All right. I think that as far as statistics on behaviour change are concerned, on things that are absolutely impossible to identify, since child behaviour is very closely related to a wide range of other factors, including television and family size, where there are two children rather than four or five, a whole series of factors are involved, and such factors, I think, cannot possibly be measured.

With regard to housewives, there are obviously some who can at some point in their lives... and the way in which our society is organized makes it difficult to reconcile work and family life. However, it should also be mentioned that, in real, everyday life, the vast majority of women with children are in the job market. The vast majority of mothers work and we often forget that they represent over 70% of women in general. In fact, more than 50% of women with children under three are in the job market. This is because they are faced with an economic situation in which they have no choice. What we are saying is that when people decide to stay at home, they should not be penalized in the long term. Because economic self-sufficiency in our societies... given that one marriage in two ends in divorce and that single-income families cannot make ends meet, women should not be penalized for temporarily leaving the job market. While working, they should have access to basic training and, while working, to leave that allows them to return to their job. Therefore, it must not be a choice that places a person at a disadvantage. The problem is that some women make this choice, but are penalized then tremendously and, in particular, when they retire. For at that time, women usually find themselves living in poverty if they haven't worked or been active members of the labour force. This is a fact of life in our society and we have to organize our society so that looking after a family does not entail penalties.

**The President (Mr. Jean Campeau):** All right? Mr. Jacques Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** I have three minutes. Rapidly, three comments. First, to answer some of Mrs. Pagé's remarks. While we did not consider that



women make up 50% of Québec society when we set up this Commission, I would like to point out that we did so when we formed the Parti québécois delegation. It consists of three men and three women. The delegation of permanent members.

Secondly, I would like to ask the Minister for the Status of Women to take Mr. Dufour at his word when he says that it would be relatively easy to set up a parental leave fund in Québec. Let's take him at his word and create this fund. Since it would be easy, I'm sure we can obtain the support of Mr. Ouellet and Mr. Hogue. So, go ahead, Mrs. Pagé.

Thirdly, with respect to the charters, I know that you'll not answer me, but I would simply like to tell you that when you ask that the Québec Charter be enshrined in the Québec constitution, you must realize that you are attacking one of the foundations of English Canada's vision of Canada, namely, that the Canadian Charter is what keeps the country together. This is the vision that prevails in English Canada. And by recommending or asking that the Charter of Rights be enshrined in the Canadian Constitution, you are attacking this vision of Canada.

Therefore, I think and hope you realize that it would be impossible to implement this recommendation in a federal system. It would never be approved. Do you know why they rejected the distinct society clause? Because they believed that this interpretative clause alone could mean that rights would be exercised differently in Québec than elsewhere. That explains why they rejected this clause. It wasn't even definite. There was merely a chance that we might use it, this distinct society clause, to exercise basic rights differently in Québec. And because of that, the overwhelming majority rejected the clause. Therefore, I know you won't answer me, that you won't say that this can only be achieved in a sovereign Québec. I nevertheless wanted to mention it to you and remind you of it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Pelchat, since you're such an expert at formulating short, precise questions, you have another one and a half minutes.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Although I don't want to badger my colleague from the Opposition, Mr. Brassard, I would nevertheless like to say that I congratulate them for having appointed three women to the Commission, three out of six, half. However, I would also like to say that I feel very isolated as a woman, the only woman on the Steering Committee, with all these men, even though I find you all very kind and helpful. Nevertheless, I think that, in the case of the Parti québécois, such a logical system should have also been used

in setting up the steering committee, where it's very important.

**Mr. Chevrette:** I'm responsible for this decision, Mrs. Pelchat.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** I would like to tell Mrs. Lavigne that I agree wholeheartedly with what she said about the changes that should be made in institutions and political parties so as to include more women. But I think we must also work on heightening women's awareness in order to encourage them to run as candidates, because this too is difficult. In any case, that is what I felt during the last election campaign... hesitation, partly on account of ignorance. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** All right? Well, Mrs. Guylaine Bérubé, Mrs. Jocelyne Olivier, Christine Marchildon, Mrs. Marie Lavigne, Hélène Tremblay and Mrs. Francine Lepage, thank you for having taken the time to come and meet with us here in the Red Chamber in order to present your brief and answer all our questions. Thank you.

**Mrs. Lavigne:** Thank you very much.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We would like to ask you to rapidly proceed to the antechamber in order to join the members of the Commission who would like to meet you and so that we may welcome our next speakers.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:38 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 8:40 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Ladies and gentlemen, would you please take your seats. We will now welcome the Conseil des affaires sociales. The time allotted is one hour. I would like to repeat the rules for one-hour hearings. There are 10 minutes for the presentation of the brief, ten minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Government, ten minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition, 25 minutes for other registered members, and five minutes for the Chair.

Mrs. Madeleine Blanchet is the Chairman of the Conseil des affaires sociales. Mrs. Blanchet, would you be kind enough to introduce your colleagues?

#### Conseil des affaires sociales

**Mrs. Blanchet (Madeleine):** Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to introduce, to my left, Mr. Jacques Jobin, the vice-president of the Conseil des affaires sociales. Mr. Jobin is also the director general of Canada World Youth, a development and intercultural exchange agency. To my far

right, Mrs. Solange Fernet-Gervais, who is also a member of the *Conseil des affaires sociales* and the director of the *Centre d'action bénévole* Normandie. Finally, Mr. Leclerc, who is the Secretary of the *Conseil des affaires sociales*.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I would like to welcome the four of you. Mrs. Blanchet, you have ten minutes to present your brief. (8:45 p.m.)

**Mrs. Blanchet:** The *Conseil des affaires sociales* is a research and advisory body that was created in 1970. It is required to give its opinion on all questions submitted to it concerning the government's social mission as a whole. It is also responsible for drawing the government's attention to questions that require immediate action in the field of health and welfare and to social questions in general.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, since the publication of the two reports on social and economic development that were distributed to you this afternoon, the *Conseil* has held numerous consultations with workers' associations, businessmen, and community development organizations in the various regions. They all bear out the conclusions presented in the two reports.

Over the past few years in the health sector, Québec has won unprecedented victories over some of the leading causes of death. It isn't rare, today, to see people survive their first, second or even third heart attack. However, when we consider the causes of poor health, which are increasing in our society, we note that they are all related to pathologies caused by social factors, regardless of whether we are talking about suicide among young people, depression, drug abuse or violence in the family. These social pathologies are very closely related to underemployment. Researchers, such as Brenner in the United States, have shown that there is a direct correlation between the increase in admissions to psychiatric hospitals in New York and the rise in unemployment.

Even here, our *Conseil* has noted that in areas with underemployment, we not only encounter precarious health, but also poor housing conditions and a low level of education, in short, all the factors that give rise to and maintain poverty. What is even more striking is that these new forms of poverty are related to underemployment, precarious and low-paid jobs, conditions which, as we all know, affect primarily young adults and women. However, a new finding has also been revealed, namely that the majority of these people are capable of working.

I will simply mention one figure, that is, the percentage of social aid recipients who are able to work. In 1970, this figure was 36.4%, and according to the latest available statistics, that is, those for the past two months, it has now

reached 79.5%. In fact, over the past few years, the social aid system has become an unemployment assistance system. With regard to the unemployment rate itself, it averaged 6.4% between 1959 and 1974. Since 1975, however, it has unfortunately amounted to over 10%. In short, although our society has made tremendous gains over the past decade in the areas of health and education, it has not managed to reduce underemployment and the poverty this situation entails. In the brief we are presenting today, we would especially like to emphasize the importance of establishing objective conditions for the creation and development of entrepreneurship in urban and rural areas affected by underemployment. These conditions concern the role that the government and its elected representatives should play in the social, economic and democratic development of Québec's local communities. I will ask Mr. Yvon Leclerc to make a few comments on this subject and will return to present our recommendations.

**Mr. Leclerc:** Mr. Chairman, when we consider the problems caused by underemployment, we are obliged to ask the following question: In theory, as a result of the various measures introduced in Québec over the past 20 or 25 years, people are healthier, better educated, and should, in theory, be better equipped to control their destiny and hold a job. If we have observed an increase in underemployment at the individual level, then we must question the political and administrative system that provides a framework for the development of these people. It is then that we realize that, over the past 20 years, Québec has undergone the most important economic changes in its history. In 1961, government spending, transfer payments and spending in general represented 26.8% of the total contribution to the gross domestic product. They accounted for 38% in 1971 and 52% in 1981. This means that, over a 20-year period, the government's place in the economy has doubled. This means that for every dollar spent in Québec, 52 cents pass through the tax system. The government has thus become omnipresent. In fact, it is the largest enterprise in the Québec economy. This money, which totals around \$ 80 000 000 000, is spent in the institutions that have been set up since the Quiet Revolution. Later, in the name of the just society, we began to duplicate, almost systematically, certain Québec institutions, with the result that we introduced a wide range of mechanisms at the national level, in Québec City and Ottawa, that were administered from above. And when the economic crisis struck in the early 1980s and we began rationalizing, in quotation marks, (this is one of the terms used in the new technocratic jargon), we started to rationalize. Well, we made cutbacks and rationalized, but, at the base of the pyramid,

communities that were used to working with mechanisms administrated from above found that they didn't have the tools they needed to really take their affairs in hand. Therefore, what we're saying is that we must be able to... and we'll come back to that. I could give many examples of this.... What we're saying is that we have to start the exercise all over again by providing local communities, municipalities and regional county municipalities, in particular, with the tools they need to take control of their development and create jobs in their region.

**Mrs. Blanchet:** As Mr. Leduc was saying, it's a bit like turning the development pyramid upside down, and to do so, in view of the high underemployment rate and its tremendous impact on health and welfare, it must be noted that the present political system is incapable of taking charge of Québec's full social, economic, and demographic development. At the same time, the high underemployment rate brings out the need to entrust a single government, namely the Québec government, with all the means needed to introduce a full employment policy. By solving the problem of underemployment, we will check the increase in poverty. These improvements will be achieved by reestablishing conditions that will allow the development of local and regional entrepreneurship in Québec, in particular, in urban and rural areas most affected by underemployment. Therefore, to ensure that local communities have the responsibilities and means needed for their development, the Conseil recommends that the Québec government first be given all the powers needed to develop employment, but also that these powers be shared by the Québec government, municipalities, regional county municipalities and urban communities. To reestablish tax equity among the various regions and allow citizens in underprivileged communities to invest in their own social and economic development, the Conseil recommends that authorization be given to set up a job development fund in each underprivileged regional county municipality and that elected municipal officers assume responsibility for the fund and that it be financed through the deductible personal income tax contributions of people living in these regional county municipalities.

In addition, to allow the democratic expression of local needs and foster strong regional awareness, the Conseil suggests that a consultative body be set up in each region and that regional county municipality prefects be required to sit on these bodies to evaluate the impact of national programs in their region and to define their development needs. The democratic exercise in which you... in which we are engaging today, is designed to reconcile the political nation with the real nation, to combine the creativity of its inhabitants with the

objective conditions that will enable them to fully participate in the creation of wealth. The building of this political nation, already begun by our parents, will require daring and perceptiveness to ensure that no one is left out.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Do you have much more to go? Your time ran out a minute or two ago. We could allow you another 30 seconds out of the Chair's time.

**Mrs. Blanchet:** Very well. I will simply add that in this way we can hand down to our children a country that is proud of its regions and of its cities and satisfied with being one of the front-runners of developed countries. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, madam. We are going to begin with Mrs. Blackburn.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, allow me to welcome the Conseil des affaires sociales. I enjoyed the presentation of the brief, all the more so because I had carefully read two of the documents you have produced: "Deux Québec dans un" and "Agir ensemble", which you also handed out to us today. For those who have not had the chance to read it, I would recommend they do so. It paints a rather tragic portrait, I would say, of the situation of impoverishment in Québec.

The hypothetical solutions you outline in the second document, which are also mentioned in your brief, propose decentralization in favour of regional governments or agencies, municipalities, and to the RCMs, which would assume some responsibility for coordinating the operation. In the regions where they would hear these legislatures, what you refer to as regional legislatures made up of RCM chairmen, they would hear the regional commissions on culture, education, the environment, regional development, training, and so on.

That implies the repatriation of a series of powers, because I think that, when you speak of repatriating powers, you realize that Québec cannot decentralize powers it does not have. This is the sort of conclusion one comes to.

Since you speak of the urgency of inverting the pyramid of underdevelopment, of the impoverishment of a large portion of the population and of underemployment, do you consider that... Because, here, in fact, once we have finished putting federalism on trial, we are here to try to envisage solutions. In a way, you criticize the current situation which is leading to impoverishment. Would you say that the situation is so serious, the situation is so urgent, that all of these powers should be repatriated? Or do you think we still have the time to wait the four years that new negotiations would take?

**Mrs. Blanchet:** I think, Mrs. Blackburn, that faced with impoverishment, particularly with the fact that we are no longer able to slow down impoverishment... Before, in the 1960s and 1970s, we managed, in our society, to improve the economic situation generally. But, in the past 10 years, we have come back to square one. We are no further ahead now than we were in 1980. And, in Québec, there are at this moment 285 000 children who are living in poverty, many of them in extreme poverty.  
(9:00 p.m.)

It is my belief that we do not have the time to wait. The fact is that we have already handicapped many of our young adults. We are going to end up handicapping, which is perhaps even worse, children who have just been born. So, I believe that there is truly a real urgency to take action. And we cannot wait through the procrastination and delays we have encountered over the past years.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** So, if I understand you correctly, this does not leave us with many hypothetical solutions. This would mean that Québec must take over the powers of the moment. It does not negotiate them. It must appropriate them, if I understand correctly. But I imagine that what you are suggesting to this Commission is that, very soon, there should be, I imagine, a popular vote on this.

**Mrs. Blanchet:** It seems clear to me that when the Commission completes its task, it will have consulted a great many organizations and a great many experts. Many of these organizations and experts will perhaps have done some consulting themselves. But one cannot say that this will represent the totally democratic expression of a popular vote that could be held subsequently. Personally, given the urgency of the situation, it is certain that we should, quite soon, very soon after the completion of this Commission's work, exercise this democratic option.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Does, if I understand you correctly, the most effective exercise or the current situation lead you to believe that the only avenue remaining to us is sovereignty, if we do not negotiate a method of sharing or economic association?

**Mrs. Blanchet:** Those questions, of course we have not consulted, for example, the network of social affairs, the sick, the poor and all those people we speak of at length in our briefs, and I think that it would be premature to conclude that absolutely the entire population would agree with our findings. However, being a study group, even if we have not conducted consultations, we are aware that a radical change is needed. If, in Québec, we want to be able to realize our full

development, if we want to be able to have all those tools of development, repatriate them, and then send them to the local level so that their full benefits are felt, we cannot dispense with first holding a popular vote. But I can tell you that, on the strength of our studies, a very radical change is required.

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

**Mrs. Blanchet:** I do not know whether my colleagues want to add anything on this matter.

**Mr. Leclerc:** On the strength of our studies too, there are roughly 3 000 000 occupied jobs; there are nearly 750 000 people asking to be employed. Therefore, if, in 1990, at the end of the Quiet Revolution and the just society, we are still at this point, well, it is high time for us to shift our rifle to the other shoulder and clear new pathways. This is clear.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine, Mrs. Blackburn. Mr. Jacques Proulx.

**Mr. Proulx:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. I believe that my organization and many people have found inspiration in the work you have been doing for the past few years, and when we examine that more closely, we can understand to a certain extent the recommendations you are making today. You have taken note of a very serious situation, an economic, social and even cultural situation in all your studies that I would say borders on catastrophe. "Two Québecs in One" is an increasingly obvious reality, and I can tell you that in the context of the work that is currently being done in the States general, this really enables a lot of people... It widens the scope and it increases the number of people who realize that those data are real and that, in a very subtle way, we were getting used to living with the situation.

That is why I'm a little disappointed, at the same time, about this fear - but you will notice that you are not alone, and I am not the first one either who is starting to be exasperated, to a certain point, with that fear of taking a very clear stand. We can diagnose the illness, we realize that we can call it what we want, but it's really generalized, cancer or something else, but we really don't want to come out and say it. What should we do? We can very well suggest that we must repatriate this, repatriate that, and so on. We talk of decentralization, we've been talking about it for 30 years now - are you still talking about it like the others have been for the past 30 years, while we have never centralized things as much as since we've been talking about decentralization?

We talk about giving back powers to the regions, to the municipalities. Those are pious wishes. Do we go farther when we talk of that, saying that we won't fall back into the same trap, that the richest ones, for example, that the richest RCMs will benefit from the situation more than the poorest ones? This will have to be fully explored. Have you gone in sufficient detail to establish a certain balance? Now I'm coming to my very more specific question, and that is, at the end of your brief, you speak of the "original country". I would like to know from your group what that means. The "original country" you are alluding to, what is it called?

**Mrs. Blanchet:** It's the same as the one Félix Leclerc spoke of, it's winter, it's Québec, of course. Mr. Proulx, I believe there are several elements to your questions. There is one element that concerns the proposed equity among the RCMs or regional county municipalities. Precisely to remedy the problems we spoke of in "Deux Québec dans un", we wanted to propose, in the report entitled "Agir ensemble", a financing method which would be fair to the RCMs that are now disadvantaged at the time being, meaning that they would do what the Americans have always said on their billboards: Put your taxes to work and build your roads. Whereas, here, we would be putting local taxes to work.

I think that the greatest advantage to this is that local involvement then becomes obvious. I mean to say that our own money will not be wasted. So, instead of money coming from higher up, it would come from the bottom, from the local level, i.e. from tax dollars. I think that this is a very important element that could reestablish equity among regional county municipalities which have public institutions and which therefore have ample job opportunities, as opposed to those which have next to none and which are extremely disadvantaged in terms of job opportunities and are in demographic decline. That is the first element. I believe that, in this original country, that would be more focused on the presence of local powers in terms of development, that element would be, I believe, very important.

Your other question, and that is whether it is important that all the organizations that appear before this learned assembly take a position on the constitutional future of Québec and the mechanisms which could lead to that. I will answer you that we have no specific mandate to do so. What we are offering here, I believe, is the testimony from people who have witnessed the evolution of poverty and have seen the evolution in people's state of health in Québec, etc. As a result, we did not hold any consultations like some of the other organizations who have made presentations here, such as the Mouvement Desjardins, of course, and other organizations which consulted their

members. It is not possible for us to go and consult the sick and the poor very easily. That is why we believe that the democratic exercise that should follow the work of this Commission will be just that: To seek the pulse of the population and to place it before extremely clear choices.

As for us, armed with our studies, and I repeat again, what is needed is a very radical change in our ways of building our political and administrative system if we want to find a solution to poverty and underemployment which are today, I believe, the two worst indicators that could exist in a society as developed as ours.

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

**Mrs. Pagé:** I would like to thank you, of course, for coming and presenting your brief. I believe that the work done by the Conseil has inspired the reflections of many organizations. I can say that, certainly for the CEQ, which made poverty and impoverishment one of its main discussion topics at its last convention, we have found items of reflection and perspective in your work. You have come to remind us that the realities of poverty, impoverishment and employment must be at the core of our blueprint for society.

I understand that you say you do not have a mandate ensuing from consultation, but allow me to point out to you that, by asking us to make a radical change in our ways of doing things in Québec and by asking us to repatriate the powers you identified in order to implement a policy of full employment, you are placing very strong demands on us, thinking that we will be able to do this in a context of neo-federalism. I believe that, and this will be my question... I hope that your organization will not be surprised that your demands will probably lead us to recommend a clear option for the future and the means with which to take on the challenge you have identified for us tonight.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Pardon me. Do you have an answer?

**Mrs. Blanchet:** There is a comment, I believe, from the Vice-President, Mr. Jobin.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I would simply like to add that the time for your answer is taken from the time allotted the member of the Commission who is asking you the question. So in that case you are taking her time. So go ahead.

**Mr. Jobin (Jacques):** May I take your time?

**Mrs. Blanchet:** Yes, Sir.

Mr. Jobin: I will make a comment to link up both questions in a certain way. One concerning the description of the original country we have, as well as our incapacity to take a radical, precise position, let us say: It's sovereignty, it's independence, we have a country. That impossibility was well described by the President of our organization. But nothing prevents us, on the other hand, from calling upon our personal experience, from also calling upon the studies that the Conseil des affaires sociales has conducted for close to 20 years to describe perhaps the "original country" a little.

If we want to know where we're going, we must know where we're coming from. And Québec has deep roots. In 1960, Québec had 6,000 missionaries abroad. Maybe that doesn't mean anything to you. I worked in the field of international cooperation for 15 years; then I was general manager of a CLSC for 7 years and I was the President of the Fédération des CLSC, before returning to international cooperation where I'm still working and earning my living. Not just to earn my living, but maybe to have an original country.

I would like to start with a brief anecdote. I taught in Burundi, a small country in Central Africa, in 1965, in the middle of the jungle, to pupils who used, shall we say, antiquated school material. We were the first Canadians to arrive in that country, since it wasn't part of the Commonwealth, and I taught geography. I put up the geography map on the wall. My pupils told me: "Sir, you say you come from that country and you speak French. That doesn't make any sense for us. It's red. It's part of the Commonwealth, and the Commonwealth is English-speaking." And I took practically the whole year to explain to them that there was a mistake on the map, that the map didn't show the reality of that country. I never wanted to get involved in politics in Québec because I believe in international cooperation.

I have never worked for the federal government. I have always worked for non-governmental organizations, because it brings you closer to the people. The budgets of those organizations are much greater than the budget of the ministère des Affaires internationales du Québec. For people who want to pursue a career in that field, they have no choice; they do it in Canada. However, you become aware, through that experience, of the fact that there were 6,000 missionaries in 1960 who were still there. In Québec, we started sending missionaries in 1880. We have people, Quebecers, who became close friends with President Nyerere of Tanzania; Nkrumah of Ghana; Mugabe. Intimate friends. We taught those people, who made independence a reality in their countries.

During those years, we also developed some pretty extraordinary people in external affairs. People like Jules Léger, for example. People

who were among the best Canadian ambassadors were Quebecers. If you take CIDA, which was the only instrument we had, the Canadian International Development Agency, Quebecers exerted considerable influence in it and continue to do so. Marcel Massé, Michel Dupuis, Gérin-Lajoie, all Quebecers, and among the best. If you take the non-governmental...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I'll have to interrupt you shortly.

Mr. Jobin: O.K., I'll go faster...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine.

Mr. Jobin: ...to get to the "original country".

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

Mr. Jobin: It won't take long.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): 30 seconds?

Mr. Jobin: Oh, come on.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Just a minute, we'll make a little arrangement. Do you think his comments are worth it, Mr. d'Anjou? (9:15 p.m.)

Mr. d'Anjou: Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): So he'll speak using your time allotment. Any objections?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. d'Anjou: He'll have to leave me a little.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Yes, you'll have a little time left. Go on, Sir...

Mr. Jobin: All right?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Yes.

Mr. Jobin: Thank you very much. International Québec beginning to gain recognition, perhaps. Look at the non-governmental organizations: Development and Peace, Oxfam Québec, OCSD are among the best NGOs, if you compare them to the NGOs of English Canada. Since the Quiet Revolution, we have added to that list Lavalin and several others which are present on the international scene. We are a people of voyageurs. We began with Louis Jolliet, with Father Marquette, with Des Grosseillers. Go back a little in history, you'll see that we come from those voyageurs who discovered America... We turned into people like Jean-Marc Léger, like Jules Léger, even Lucien Bouchard, who after all

did a fair job in Paris, even if he didn't have any direct experience in international affairs. I don't know for sure, but I don't think he had any experience. So, to come back to the "original people"...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Is this on Mr. Bouchard's time?

**Mr. Jobin:** Yes.

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

**Mr. Jobin:** To come back to the "original people"... We have a language. We have regions we had to make. We had to give them names: the royaume, the nord-ouest, the Bois-Francs, the Outaouais - which has major problems - which is my region of origin. We have artistic talents; we have developed technologies; we have discovered certain cultures. We have developed empathy for those cultures. Why? Because we lived for a long time in the shadow of great empires. What does an original country do? What does a blue Québec do on the map? It opens up North America to Latin countries; it opens up North America to Asia. It makes North America accessible, our being painted blue on the map.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Sir, I must interrupt you.

**Mr. Jobin:** O.K.

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

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank Mrs. Pagé for having left me a little time. In your recommendations, you talk of dividing powers among the Québec government, the municipalities, and local or regional levels. And to promote fiscal equity among the regions, you propose the creation, in each underprivileged RCM, of an employment development fund, to be placed under the responsibility of the municipally elected officials, and to be supplied by income tax-free contributions from individuals in the RCM. I don't find that recommendation very helpful to the RCMs that are the most underprivileged, since you say: It will be the people who have the lowest incomes who will finance the possibility of developing job opportunities, the employment development funds.

In this perspective, while I agree with the objective you are pursuing, don't you instead envisage, in addition to that (which is not to be rejected but which, in my opinion, is largely insufficient) the fact that based on major national programs, that a certain part be handed down to the local or regional authorities so it

can be truly effective and that we can manage to establish a certain equity?

**Mrs. Blanchet:** We must be brief, Mr. d'Anjou; we also say in our presentation that one does not exclude the other. And it is quite obvious that the programs already in place in the various departments could, must, also go to the local and regional levels.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Thank you then.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you for being brief, Mr. d'Anjou. Mrs. Simard.

**Mrs. Simard:** Thank you. Upon reading your brief, we can see that it was greatly inspired by the two excellent studies "Deux Québec dans un" and "Agir ensemble", which are now reference documents for many organizations in Québec. And which I think, by the way, will be cited several times during the hearings of this Commission. One of the things that has been shown and which is very important is that, despite the economic growth that Québec has seen over recent years, wealth has not been evenly distributed and, on the contrary, we have observed an increase in disparities. And in your studies we have observed the deterioration that this causes, not only on the economic level, but on the cultural, social, demographic levels, and so on. And that, in particular, it is women who are more affected by the impact you have described.

One question that is simple, I think, and calls for a quick answer, is that, upon reading your brief and your studies: isn't it your evaluation that the economic policies that have been advanced, particularly the macro-economic policies - as well as all the various programs resulting from them, in particular from the federal government - aren't those policies and programs lamentable failures which have helped deteriorate, to a large degree, the condition of an ever-growing portion of the population of Québec and of several regions of Québec? I would like a clear answer on this question from the Conseil, since you have studied, more than other bodies, the impact of such policies. In addition, I would like to know: What is your notion - since you propose a redistribution of powers, you propose to turn the pyramid you illustrated so well upside down - what is your notion of the State, in a future Québec, that would effectively make the choice of separating?

**Mrs. Blanchet:** I'll ask Yvon Leclerc to answer the first part of the question.

**Mr. Leclerc:** When, on the evening news one night at the beginning of June, Lucien Bouchard, who is here with us, said: this country isn't working; we, through our studies, we'd

known for a long time that it wasn't working and the local populations knew it too, they knew the country wasn't working. So, we tried to understand why and we found out that it had to do with the mechanisms that enable the local populations to work with the social and political environment.

Individuals are better trained, are more ready than ever, but the political environment they are evolving in works against them. For example, following the national forum on employment held in Lévis, here, the RCM of Lévis, we had brought the national forum on employment to the local level and we tried to understand how a concerted effort... how to go about achieving cooperation at the local level. Then, they noticed that those who were seeking employment are represented by Québec's Centres de main-d'oeuvre, Canada's Manpower centres, the Bureau de l'aide sociale and the Commissions de formation professionnelle, who each had their mandate but which came from the departments they represented. To the extent that the first morning we met, and Mr. Béland was there, a business contractor came and said: "I went to the brickyard on Highway 132 yesterday. There are three jobs for bricklayers there." So then, the news came like that and no one knew what to do with it because, at the Travail-Québec centre, the mandate was to administer the employability programs, the job-training programs and programs of this and that. The other one was there to respond to that need.

They wrote that down on a little piece of paper and stuck it up on the wall at the Canada Manpower office and so on. And at the local level, even those who were there to administer employment requests weren't able to draw a connection between the two. That is why we say: We can always repatriate powers to Québec; all the powers necessary for the development of job offers as well as job requests. That's a lot, that. But, if we have them in Québec City, then we absolutely have to bring them back to the level of the local populations and in particular the RCMs we had identified, a certain number of powers that will enable this curbing of the unemployed which has reached epidemic proportions here.

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

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to join those who spoke before me in paying official tribute, in special circumstances, to the work that the Conseil des affaires sociales has done for several years now and for the advancement of a cause that is dear to us all, whose attainment you have made possible. This being said, I of course reread your brief with much interest and, quite simply, to clarify a point that was raised by one of the

members of this Commission, just for a clarification regarding the employment development fund, are these voluntary contributions we are talking about? Did I understand you correctly?

**Mrs. Blanchet:** Yes, that's right.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Then, so there are no reservations, so that it is well understood. We are talking, of course, about voluntary contributions.

To continue, if you will allow me, still as a preamble, to refer to a very specific example of the ability, at the grass-roots level, to raise funds, and I was referring - I don't know... Mrs. Bélanger was here, a few minutes ago - to what the RCM of Granit did with the level of development of Mount Gosford and the very sizeable sums that were raised, several hundreds of thousands of dollars were raised at the grass-roots level from their own resources. And this is a region that is not particularly well-off. And all that brings me to my question, which pertains more specifically to the last aspect of your recommendation, as to the mechanisms to be foreseen in a possible Québec constitution. Would there, of course, there would be a constitutional recognition of a certain sharing and of a delegation of responsibilities at the local levels. But, to counterbalance the demographic evolution, would it not be advisable to set up compensatory mechanisms at the operational level of the State itself in the distribution of resources to the underprivileged regions, to answer certain remarks that were made previously?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Blanchet, can you answer quickly?

**Mrs. Blanchet:** Yes, very quickly. I think that, well, under the... Rather, the levels to which officials are elected at this time are only two levels in Québec, and that is why we recommended a consultation mechanism at the regional level, but still through elected officials. That is the reason, Mr. Nicolet, why we recommended it, that's because there aren't any... Our 14 administrative regions have no elected officials at their head, so that is the reason why we thought up this mechanism.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, ma'am. We now go to Mr. Russell... Mr. Williams.

**Mr. Williams:** I think I'll change my name. It'll be easier.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Oh, well! Yes.

**Mr. Williams:** No, it's too much trouble.



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

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Without it, you wouldn't have spoken last the other day.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That's right.

**A voice:** You're right.

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

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much also, Mrs. Blanchet, for your presentation tonight. In the name of my political group, I would like to thank you for the excellent brief, but I would also like to thank you for 20 years of work. Not you personally, but the Conseil des affaires sociales, because I believe that the Conseil has done excellent and pertinent work for the everyday lives of Québec people. I wanted to emphasize that tonight.

I would like to go back a little to the topic that Mrs. Simard and Mr. d'Anjou already discussed. You spoke of too much "national" and not enough "local". You spoke of repatriating powers, but every time you spoke of that, you spoke of repatriating, not necessarily at the Québec level, but at the municipal or regional level, the regional authorities.

Can you explain the sharing between the Québec government and the regional authorities to ensure that the responsibilities of the Québec government in the matter of poverty and underemployment are well defined, because... I share your opinion somewhat. The regional authorities are in the best position to meet needs, but how will we be able to establish Québec policies? I know that we discussed the topic a little, but I would like to go back to that issue. How will we be able to establish that level?

(9:30 p.m.)

**Mrs. Blanchet:** I think that, concerning the macro-economic policies Mrs. Simard was speaking about, for instance, a policy that wouldn't do what the Bank of Canada is doing right now, that is, maintaining a very high interest rate and a very high dollar which... That certainly is a very, very uncivilized way to obtain certain results, no doubt, but which causes unemployment. And that, that is very serious. Therefore, macro-economic policies surely should be able to be decided within the Québec government because it will be absolutely impossible to delegate other powers to a lower level, to the regional and local levels, if we haven't first recovered our macro-economic tools. That I believe was the answer, maybe the first, to the question posed by Monique Simard. I'm happy that you gave me the chance to go back to it.

Now, after that, concerning the equity mechanisms for distribution among the various regions, I believe that mechanisms of this type have been developed in the education sector, and I think that the health sector is prepared to do the same. So, I'm not too worried about that part of the work which will be left for us to do once we have gone ahead with the first operation, that is, the operation of the higher level toward Québec.

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you. Just one more short question. Do you believe that we will be able to win the battle against poverty and underemployment more easily with or without economic ties with the rest of Canada?

**Mrs. Blanchet:** I'll ask Jacques Jobin to say a word and I'll give you my personal opinion afterward.

**Mr. Jobin:** I'll give a very short answer: Yes. With our experience of over a century...

**Mr. Williams:** "Yes" with or without...

**Mr. Jobin:** Obviously, "yes", with a Québec State that would be sovereign, we are able to establish standards, establish the policies that will be needed to enable the regions of Québec to fully develop and to build themselves up. Now, it's a first step to take which will lead to agreements, which will lead to negotiations, to agreements with other possible countries. There's nothing wrong with that, we have had 100 years of life together, there are certainly things that we can do together still, if the partner is willing. But I think that the debate takes in more than that. We must establish our principles, establish democratic principles of sharing, of building up the regions, then, after that, we must see in which framework Québec can exercise them. I would like to close by quoting Robert Kennedy who said: "Nothing will ever happen if all possible objections must first be overcome."

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** All right, Mr. Williams? Fine. Mr. Guy Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Mr. Chairman, I salute you and commend you. All the others have done so before me. To save time, I agree with much that has been said.

On page 12 of your brief, you say something which pleasantly surprised me. I presided over the commission des affaires sociales for four years, and socially based organizations always tend to tell us that there must be sharing of the wealth. The ACEFs told us that the other day that it was incredible,

there wasn't enough sharing of the wealth! And you come up with a different concept. You say that the constitutional exercise which is now taking place must, above all, allow the populations of the other Québec to actively participate in the creation of wealth. It seems to me that there is a shade of meaning over and above a play on words. I would like to have your comments on that.

**Mrs. Blanchet:** I'll ask Yvon Leclerc to say a word and I will no doubt add something.

**Mr. Leclerc:** Someone said a little while ago that the contribution of the governments, together, to Québec's gross domestic product was 52%. That is a great deal. And it is already distributing wealth, in a certain way; the redistribution of wealth, if only through income tax, for instance, which is progressive. But what is considered today as the major role of the State should be to enable all individuals, no matter where they live on the territory, whether in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve or in Amqui or in Mont-Laurier, to be able to create their employment and to work, to participate in the creation of the wealth; to give them the opportunity, whereas now, we're quite obliged to acknowledge that the competition that often exists in the government programs of Québec and Ottawa, and which are up above, doesn't allow the populations which are below... You have to be heroic, in certain parts of Québec, and here I say once again, whether it's in the heart of Montréal or in certain regions, you have to be heroic to work. And you'd best not lose your job because it's no coincidence that the rate of suicide is so high. It's very serious, and it's much more serious than is generally believed. Perhaps Solange who lives in a...

**Mrs. Fernet-Gervais (Solange):** The creation of that wealth must be accomplished through partnership. And that partnership must rely on the vitality of the regions. The regions have something to say, and we must let them, with the political will and a blueprint for society, develop themselves through their individual needs, their own creativity and with a regional consensus. And countries like France, since the last war, have shown us that when there is the political will to revitalize regions, to occupy a territory. There is a possibility on the condition that the people of that region act in cooperation and are allowed to give their own life breath and give back a soul to each region, which is very distinct. And I can assure you that the debates we are currently having for a political future, each region is having it's own in its own distinct way. And we must go and seek out this creativity and this wealth of each individual, in each region, with its local colour, and we must respect it.

**Mr. Leclerc:** And trust it, Mr. Chairman. Because, as we saw at the turn of the century, when Alphonse Desjardins set up the caisses, the "mouvement", this was truly the basic orientation he had, and that was to place trust in the people, no matter where they lived. And that's what we must do now.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** In that sense, I understand more fully the second, following sentence in which we all know that the unforeseen impact of the financing policy of public service institutions, as well as the numerous standardized programs have caused the deterioration of the objective conditions for the emergence of entrepreneurship. Too much government... enough is enough. At a certain point, interventions must be correctly proportioned, and powers must be granted instead to the regional level, if I correctly summarize what you are saying, rather than...

There is one last sentence that you said... because time is running out, we must go faster... that was much more than a poem, Mrs. Blanchet, when you say: "Reconciling the real country with the political country" - what do you mean to say?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You may answer by a "yes" or by a "no".

**Mrs. Blanchet:** The real country is the country we know. The political country is the country we don't know yet. Because we have a problem of bicephalous leadership: there is only one body but two heads. Regarding that, there is an African proverb which Jacques Jobin just related to us, which says that when two elephants fight together, men are trampled. That is what has happened to a certain degree, I think, in many of our regions. There are two Québec. There is a Québec that is doing very well, and undoubtedly around this table, we are part of the Québec that is doing well. But we must deal with the one that is doing not so well and is developing in second gear. We mustn't lose sight of that one in our blueprint for society.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. Fine, Mr. Bélanger. Mr. Jacques Léonard.

**Mr. Léonard:** Yes. Mrs. Blanchet, I too wish to congratulate you, after all the others. I had the opportunity to read your document "Agir ensemble" and it indicates an analysis of the regions that are emptying out in Québec, which is a sad and extraordinary tragedy. You provide a certain number of solutions. We are here today to discuss institutions, we might say. I myself consider that Quebecers are highly governed, to say the least. You propose to place, or attribute powers to the RCMs or the municipalities, many

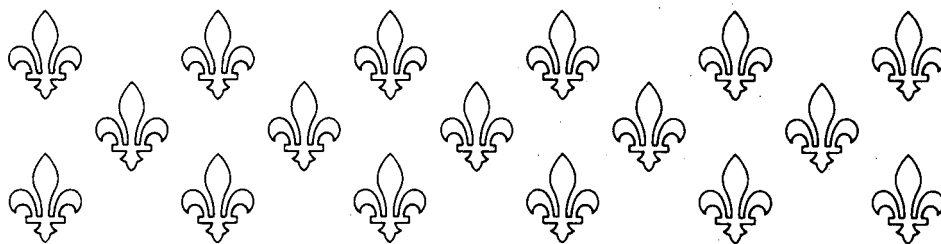
powers, to try to reduce poverty and especially, beyond that, to promote development. I still have a problem, because we are here to discuss institutions. You propose to us that the RCMs be established more firmly in our system. And I say that, then, we are talking about many levels. If I were to say to you "Before saying yes to your blueprint, tell us which of the two governments you are going to choose, Ottawa or Québec." After, we'll have one here and another one at the level of the RCMs. That might be simpler, and the overlapping won't occur. Which one would you choose, Ottawa or Québec? You have the choice, but it's a choice that must be made.

**Mrs. Blanchet:** To carry out the objectives we propose in our brief, it is certain that only one government is needed. Overlapping takes on such magnitude. And it's not over. We see that the Commission de formation professionnelle... There is a very big group now in Ottawa that has even proposed to go the level of the RCMs, therefore passing right over the Québec government and going to the RCMs. That, mind you, would be the supreme case of overlapping. As you mentioned, the RCMs are barely alive and we are going to pit them against each other before a federal manna. I believe that that has lasted long enough, Mr. Léonard. If you want our advice, all of us here, the members of the Conseil, it is time to choose. And regarding the development of jobs and all-over development, it can only be the Québec government which must be in command.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** On that note, Mrs. Solange Fernet-Gervais, Mr. Yvon Leclerc, Mr. Jacques Jobin, Mrs. Madeleine Blanchet, thank you for your contribution to our reflection, to the reflection of the Commission on the political and constitutional future of Québec.

Now, for the other members, for the members of the Commission, the next meeting is tomorrow, at 9:30 a.m., in the Windsor Hall of the Windsor building, on Stanley Street. The bus for Montréal leaves at 9:55 p.m. from door 6.

(End of sitting, 9:43 p.m.)



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# ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

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PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

## Journal des débats



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

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

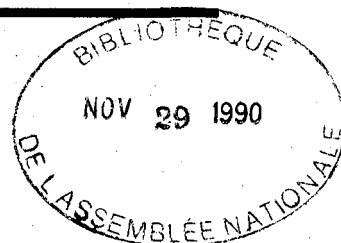
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**QUÉBEC**



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Mr. Jacques Parizeau

Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier

Mr. Claude Béland

Mr. Ghislain Dufour

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Mr. Lucien Bouchard

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Mr. Robert Libman

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Mr. Marcel Beaudry

Mr. Jean Campeau

Mr. Russell Williams

Mrs. Lorraine Pagé

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Montréal, Wednesday, November 14, 1990

## Hearings: Organizations

(9:40 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Ladies and gentlemen, I declare this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. May I remind you that at the beginning of the sitting, for a few minutes, photographers will be present. As this first Montréal sitting begins, I would also remind you of the Commission's mandate, which is to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and to make recommendations thereon.

Today's sitting will be devoted to hearing the following groups: at 9:30 a.m., the Union des artistes, for an hour and a half; at 11:00 a.m., the Montréal Board of Trade, also for an hour and a half; at 2:00 p.m., the Fédération des groupes ethniques du Québec, for an hour and a half; at 3:30 p.m., the Alliance des professeurs et professeurs de Montréal; at 4:30 p.m., the Société québécoise de droit international; at 5:00 p.m., the Forum pour l'emploi; and at 8:30 p.m., the Task Force on Canadian Federalism.

The length of the sittings may be one hour and thirty minutes, one hour, or thirty minutes. During one-hour sittings, the person presenting the brief has 10 minutes to do so, and during thirty-minute sittings, the person in question has five minutes to present the brief. The speaking time for the various groups, which includes both questions and answers, are as follows: for sittings lasting one hour and thirty minutes, like the one this morning, 10 minutes for the Chair, 15 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the government, 15 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition, and 40 minutes for members registered with the Chair, each of whom are entitled to 10 minutes. The time varies for shorter sittings, and we will discuss this further as necessary.

I will now ask Mr. Turgeon to introduce his colleagues, all of whom, of course, are members of the Union des artistes, which explains the fact that the photographers are so anxious to get their pictures. I am saying this to pass the time, Mr. Turgeon, to allow them to finish so we can see you.

**Mr. Turgeon:** You're doing a fine job. You may soon be getting your licence, Mr. Bélanger.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I was just wondering if, after spending all these weeks together, we might not all be made honorary members! In any case, we'll see.

**Mr. Turgeon:** We can arrange it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** All right, whenever you're ready, Mr. Turgeon.

## Union des artistes

**Mr. Turgeon (Serge):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know that actors are used to premieres, so we are particularly happy to be here for the Montréal premiere, to have been invited to these hearings.

I must say that, from this vantage point, this table is quite impressive in its makeup. One does not have at all the same perspective, the same viewpoint as on the other side.

Having said this, I will introduce those accompanying me: to my right, Serge Demers, director general; Élizabéth Chouvalidzé, our first vice-president; Louise Pinsonneault, director of communications; and to my left, Réal Gauthier and Lise Côté, members of our communication departments.

In keeping with the spirit of decentralization, the Union des artistes is extremely democratic. In this same spirit of decentralization, I will ask our vice-president, Mrs. Chouvalidzé, to proceed with the opening statement.

**Mrs. Chouvalidzé (Élizabéth):** Messrs. co-chairmen, Prime Minister, Leader of the Official Opposition, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, we are very aware that the law of destiny is taking effect. We all want Québec's durability to be proclaimed in the blueprint for society, which has already made great strides. Because their collective imagination and memory conjure up the image of a promising future, because they share a language, a way of life and the pleasure of living side by side, today's Quebecers naturally feel a strong need to assume their own destiny. Quebecers must voice, as never before, their desire to live in a true country, and their desire to participate freely in mankind's evolution.

In mankind's image, a society is the sum of its parts. Of course, the economy and politics are major aspects of Québec's future, but without the cultural dimension, the blueprint for the society we are shaping together will be meaningless. We must recall that throughout its history, for want of power, Québec relied on its culture to survive — we know only too well — within an uninhabitable federation. Not only is our culture unique, it is also our vital resource, our lifeblood. Without it, Québec would never have had a separate identity.

Since culture has always been Québec's strength, its very essence, let us give it a place of honour in our blueprint for the future. The



fundamental nature of culture as part of Québec's existence and durability must be enshrined in its Constitution. First, the Québec Constitution must include, as the country's basic *raison d'être*, the French culture and language, both staunchly upheld. To succeed in this undertaking, we must put our trust in ourselves. Your Commission is composed mainly of businesspeople. Business equals initiative and risk, which must, of course, be reasonably calculated. Your past experiences are a constant reminder that in business you can't predict the future, but if at times you succeed with flair, it is because you have learned to manage the unforeseeable, the unpredictable.

From this perspective, the blueprint with which we are concerned is of the same substance, that is, indicators, concrete, significant elements and intangible factors. Like businesspeople, artist-performers are independent entrepreneurs who, each day, must perform to survive. Like businesspeople, they evaluate and take risks and especially, put their trust in themselves and the public. Knowing what is currently at stake, we must immediately commit ourselves to the blueprint for society which brings us together today, with courage, determination and confidence.

And now, let me address the artist-performers' support for the sovereignty option. In September 1990, the Union des artistes held a referendum for its members on Québec's constitutional future. The question was put clearly: Are you for or against Québec sovereignty? Over 90% of members voted in favour of sovereignty. This means that the basic sovereignty option set out in the Union brief is backed by the vast majority of its members. The artist-performers proclaim their desire to live, as soon as possible, in a Québec totally free of the Canadian yoke. We declare that sovereignty is a natural state. To live with the confidence of a sovereign people, with the certainty that their country exists, that it is here to stay... this is the destiny of all Quebecers!

To accomplish this, Québec must assume once and for all the consequences of its distinct character. Today, we must assert our right to our intellectual, cultural, geographical, political and economic space. Québec wants sovereignty: it is a natural state. Within the Confederation, Québec, to grow and develop, has always tried to carve out a place for itself by demanding more power in separate fields, but never globally. And Canada always answered Québec by reacting to individual situations and reinforcing its centralized position. The time for action is now. Today, if there is no clear stand taken by Québec on Ottawa's recent immigration projects, it will soon be too late to act. "Louisianization" and "Manitobanization" have become inevitable. Given the adamant refusal of the federal government to grant Québec the freedom to act in immigration,

communication and other crucial areas, Québec society has no other choice but to assume its destiny alone.

Québec's economy and culture are in desperate need of an overall direction, strong leadership and the appropriate political levers to continue its development. Development efforts already under way must be backed by collective action. Such action on the part of all partners is essential for economic and cultural success. We are, however, all well aware that in practice it is impossible to obtain such a consensus unless a well-defined blueprint for society arouses a strong feeling of identity.

If there is a hidden dimension to culture, it is surely its considerable contribution to the economy and product esthetics, its spinoff industries, its ties to the quaternary sector which combines intelligence and sensitivity in a concentrated focus on future development, its production-oriented activities and contribution to quality of life. Culture has a significant economic impact.

In 1990, culture's returns can be estimated at over \$5 billion for Québec alone. Needless to say, one of the basic objectives of sovereignty must be Québec's sole power in the field of culture. The path to sovereignty, in our opinion, lies in proclaiming it and making it our own, because it is public property. Quebecers as a whole must decide democratically that they will be accountable to no one but themselves and the political institutions they have established.

As such, given the developments of the current political situation and following the publication of the Commission's report, we propose the following steps to Québec sovereignty: to hold a referendum on sovereignty as soon as possible; to declare sovereignty and draw up the Constitution; and finally, to begin negotiations, for, as you well know, Québec needs to establish links with other countries in a spirit of openness, cooperation, discussion and enrichment. Canada would certainly be one of these countries. However, if it were impossible to reach an agreement with Canada, this would not in any way threaten our sovereignty.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, we declare that Québec's sovereignty depends basically on culture. Although the Canadian Constitution acknowledges provincial jurisdiction in cultural affairs, the central government has nonetheless gradually taken over this key area, with the direct result that the implementation and practice of a true cultural policy specific to Québec is impeded, and incoherent, economically unjustifiable duplication of structures is perpetuated.

Consequently, to define the cultural, artistic and communications component of our blueprint for society, Québec must establish an arts and culture action plan containing all the measures necessary to achieve cultural independence, based

on the social and economic dimensions of its future. This implies repatriating all relevant powers, legislation, organizations and resources currently in the hands of the Canadian government: the Québec branch of the Canada Council, the CBC, the National Film Board, Telefilm Canada, the National Archives, and the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission.

In these decisive days of our history, we must address the scope of the task which is the responsibility of each and every one of us: to create Québec. This far-reaching ideal must take precedence over all that which, as individuals, separates and concerns us. From the heart and from the head, we hereby declare that the full sovereignty of Québec is the key to the success of the blueprint for the future which you are currently analysing.

At the forefront of culture, which is Québec's lifeblood, artist-performers are already committed to sharing with all Quebecers the idea of progress, fulfilment and freedom through sovereignty.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Madame, we now see what it is to deal with professionals. You kept exactly to your time limit, no more, no less.

**Mrs. Chouvalidzé:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Now then, we will begin this morning's questions and comments with those of the parliamentary group forming the government. Mr. Rémillard is the first to take the floor.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen artists, thank you for having agreed to come and speak before us this morning, thank you for having provided us with this very interesting, well-written brief. An aspect of this brief that is immediately apparent is its forthrightness on an issue the Commission considers very important. You propose sovereignty for Québec, and you propose it - I feel this should be pointed out - following a referendum held among your members, with results, as you mentioned, of 90% in favour.

I liked many aspects of your brief. Some of them raise questions, and we will be doing the same shortly, but I really liked the parallel you drew between culture and the economy. You stress this in your brief, much to your credit in my view. I, for one, have always considered that the status of a language is directly proportional to the economic status of those who speak it. And, since language is one of the main vehicles for culture, on a cultural level - the same thing applies to many levels. We might say this is unfortunate in many cases, but the reality exists

nonetheless.

In this context, the judgment you hand down is quite severe as concerns culture and major federal organizations. You say in your brief that the creation of major Canadian cultural institutions such as CBC, Telefilm and the Canada Council, has resulted in Québec's gradually being deprived of certain powers, like the court decisions concerning cable television and telecommunications. But as concerns these major federal institutions, CBC, Telefilm and the Canada Council in particular, do you not feel that these institutions have also contributed to the growth and development of Québec's culture?

**Mr. Turgeon:** Bravo. Good question, Mr. Rémillard. Indeed, I would have to say regarding the first part of what you said, that we held a referendum in September with all our Québec members, and the issue was clear. I don't think it could be said that it was slanted, I mean, in both the English-language and French-language media, it was clear. Are you for or against Québec sovereignty? Result: as you said, over 90%. I would like to emphasize that the referendum and so forth was held and, as far as we are concerned in the Union des artistes, will always be held, in a non-partisan spirit. Although the issue of Québec's political future is first and foremost a political one, we feel it is essential that it not be partisan, and will do everything in our power to avoid this trap, if indeed it is a trap.

We also stressed in our brief that, when we speak of culture, we're not just building castles in the air. We're referring to real, concrete things. And we also felt it was important to put the economic sector on the same level as the cultural sector because we are convinced that Québec's economy, like everywhere else in the world, the economy is shaped by culture. And since there are people present who are business-people and who know the meaning of figures, we said to ourselves: We're going to speak concretely and we're going to use figures. It is said that culture in Québec, which includes a part of the communications sector, for Québec alone, in 1990 figures, is something like a \$5.5-billion business, or thereabouts. An enormous sum. With figures like this, we're not far from Mr. Poissant's pulp and paper plants. It's true that Radio-Canada, for example, and the National Film Board have done extraordinary work, have been prime vehicles for Francophone culture in this country. It's true. It's true that Radio-Canada has had its moments of glory... the National Film Board. In the end, they revealed talent, produced broadcasts, showed Quebecers just what culture in their own image could be like. And, at that time, I think that such organizations achieved what they set out to achieve.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Turgeon...

**Mr. Turgeon:** And over the past few years, and this is where it is important to keep things in perspective, we have come to realize, finally, that the federal government, through its institutions and the so-called cultural mandates it has set for itself, interferes considerably with a field of jurisdiction which, in our mind, should belong to Québec. And this is where the difficulties crop up.

**Mr. Rémillard:** If I understand you correctly, it's not all bad. It's in that sense that...

**Mr. Turgeon:** It wasn't all bad.

**Mr. Rémillard:** ...it wasn't all bad.

**Mr. Turgeon:** That's what I said.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Yes. So, based on what you just said, I will now read on page 30 of your brief a passage which I find particularly interesting. You state: "There is no question of discussing the division of any power with Canada whatsoever". But in the same paragraph, it appears that you are referring to - if you will permit the expression - pure, hardline sovereignty.

**Mr. Turgeon:** No.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Then you are qualifying.

**Mr. Turgeon:** If I may answer.

**Mr. Rémillard:** And two sentences further on, you say that we could have "a form of preferred collaboration" with the rest of Canada. "This could result in a form of association and the creation of co-operative, decision-making authorities governing various aspects of Québec society." Mr. Turgeon, my question is the following: What are these various aspects and this association?  
(10:00 a.m.)

**Mr. Turgeon:** You will notice that although it is pure, it is not as hardline as all that, in the final analysis. These various aspects what we are saying, Mr. Rémillard, is that there is no question of power sharing. Our current system is one of shared powers, and therein lies the problem. In a sovereign Québec which will have to negotiate and necessarily, absolutely, open itself to the world, in a sovereign Québec we will have to negotiate agreements. Perhaps we will not share powers; perhaps we will give up certain powers. And this is where negotiation comes in. We can agree on currency, we can agree on the army, on several other factors, but on the cultural level, it is fundamental that we keep full powers here in Québec.

**Mr. Demers (Serge):** If I may...

**Mr. Rémillard:** Yes.

**Mr. Demers:** ...I would like to add, with respect to what Mr. Turgeon just said, that it is important to maintain an open mind and a certain flexibility, because there are components, even at the cultural level. I am thinking, for example, of Francophone Canadians in other provinces, of Francophones outside Québec who deserve and must continue to receive a number of services. One might think, for example, of modern-day Radio-Canada, which provides services to these communities throughout the other provinces. Here in Québec we have the Anglophone minority, which is also entitled to a number of services, and in this case, there may be reciprocity agreements enabling us to provide services to Francophones outside Québec and enabling Francophones, excuse me, Québec Anglophones, to also receive certain services. It is in this perspective that we wish to remain flexible and negotiate, without having to give up the powers we would like to see attributed to Québec.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Does this mean, for example, that we could keep Radio-Canada?

**Mr. Turgeon:** Certainly not Radio-Canada, since Radio-Canada answers to Communications Canada. I think that, in a sovereign Québec, Québec would have to take over its public television station or stations. The entire French-language section of the CBC, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as such, must definitely be repatriated to Québec.

**Mr. Rémillard:** And for Canadians...

**Mr. Turgeon:** Like the section...

**Mr. Rémillard:** ...Francophones outside Québec?

**Mr. Turgeon:** Francophones outside Québec...

**Mr. Rémillard:** To reach...

**Mr. Turgeon:** ...The Francophones outside Québec... Québec will certainly have responsibilities towards them, but who will govern the Francophones outside Québec? Ottawa will, and it will be up to Ottawa to determine how it will solve the problem of its minority. We will see how it deals with a minority. Here in Québec, we have a minority, and we know how we're going to behave toward it.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Does this not mean, Mr. Turgeon, that you are abandoning a role that has always been attributed to Québec, that of the home of French expression, not only for Canada, but for all of North America?

**Mr. Turgeon:** Not at all, I think that the stronger Québec is in its culture, in its identity, the more Francophones outside Québec, whether Canadian or American, will identify with it.

**Mr. Rémillard:** As concerns the approach you propose, are you proposing beginning with a referendum?

**Mr. Turgeon:** Yes.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Essentially, that's...

**Mr. Turgeon:** We propose first, if I may, first of all, broadening the consensus. When surveys show that 78% of the population, or approximately that, are not even aware of the objectives of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission... I find this completely unacceptable. Therefore, it is important, from the start, to show these people what we do, and I think that, following the Commission's hearings, forums will have to be set up everywhere to tell people "Well, you see, this is what we're talking about, this is the gist of it". And then, once they are well informed, because it is essential that they be well informed, to hold a referendum as soon as possible.

**Mr. Rémillard:** So the referendum would not be linked to an election?

**Mr. Turgeon:** No, no, no.

**Mr. Rémillard:** There will be a difference...

**Mr. Turgeon:** It is completely different. We do not want a referendum related to an election, that is clear. A separate referendum, and then there will be elections to decide which government, which party, is best qualified to govern sovereignty, if sovereignty there is.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** There are four minutes remaining for this group. Mrs. Claire-Hélène Hovington.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Mr. Turgeon, it gives me great pleasure to hear you this morning. I just wanted to point out, to give an example of what you have said, that on October 9... - great minds think alike - on October 9, right here, in this beautiful Windsor Room which is part of our heritage - and thank heaven it's been renovated, it's a lovely room - there was a retrospective of one of Québec's great painters, René Gagnon, and French investors were present to purchase his paintings. I mention this fact to illustrate what you mean by economic spinoffs from the arts for Québec. There is a very, very significant economic impact. You spoke of \$4.7 billion, and over \$5 billion...

**Mr. Turgeon:** \$5.5 billion.

**Mrs. Hovington:** \$5.5 billion, and I believe that includes only the performing arts...

**Mr. Turgeon:** It includes...

**Mrs. Hovington:** That is apart from the visual arts, apart from...

**Mr. Turgeon:** No, that includes, that is everything combined, but it is only a part of communications. This must be made clear.

**Mrs. Hovington:** This is why I wanted to give an example. In fact, this exhibition was even sponsored by a bank, the BICT. I mentioned this to show that Québec businesspeople are becoming increasingly interested in the arts and in cultural spinoffs. And this is a bonus for all Québec artists, I believe.

**Mr. Turgeon:** May I add something?

**Mrs. Hovington:** Yes.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Just to say that in Japan, in Japan businessmen are encouraged to invest in culture, because they are convinced that by doing so, it will give them more imagination for their own business.

**Mrs. Hovington:** I see that in your brief, you accord importance to human capital. You call it the quaternary sector, which includes scientific research, technological innovation, and artistic creation and expression. In fact, human capital seems to be a focal point of your brief, and I think this is very important.

When you refer to federal mismanagement of cultural affairs, I think that your conclusions correspond quite closely to those of the Ministère des Affaires culturelles. I don't know if you... you must undoubtedly know because you mention, among other things... you refer several times to jurisdiction legally reserved for Québec, of exclusive jurisdiction in the area of culture. But you must be aware that in the Constitution of 1867, no mention is made whatsoever of Québec's culture or cultural power. And we have, if you will, cultural powers in Québec... we are involved simply because of our jurisdiction over education, for example. So, it is for this reason that you mention, you recommend, that it be enshrined in the Constitution.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Yes, this is basically why we are concerned with it and why it must be enshrined in the Constitution. That's the way it is with sovereignty, sovereignty is closely linked to culture. If there was no culture, there could be no talk of sovereignty.

**Mrs. Hovington:** You say, on page 22 of your brief: "In a sovereign Québec, an even greater boom in Québec creation and performance is highly probable". I would like to you to comment a bit more specifically on this. How would sovereignty encourage and feed creativity, which is already flourishing in Québec?

**Mr. Turgeon:** Because at this point in time, creativity is already flourishing, and it is true that Quebecers are a creative people...

**Mrs. Hovington:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Turgeon:** ...and what's more, an enthusiastic, creative people. We wouldn't want this to deteriorate or fall off. If we have control over our policies, complete control over our policies, without anyone making decisions in our place that would force us in a certain direction, we will be able to ensure conditions that are conducive to creation. I would like Québec to have control over its policies, full control over its policies in film; full control over all its policies in television, without any other external entity imposing its regulations and laws. This means: masters of our culture, complete jurisdiction over culture and communications so we can take responsibility and develop in a direction that is ours, and ours alone.

**Mrs. Hovington:** And I believe that you recommend, in conclusion, Mr. Chairman, on pages 29 and 30... on page 29, you speak of a referendum on sovereignty and, on page 30, you also mention, if I am not mistaken, a second referendum once the Constitution is drawn up.

**Mr. Turgeon:** That is...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Briefly, please, Mr. Turgeon. Your time is up, a brief response.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Yes, very brief. Once we have a constitution, I think it is only democratic to ask the population to accept and enshrine it. And this would be the purpose of the second referendum.

**Mrs. Hovington:** In another referendum.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Yes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will now go on to the parliamentary group forming the Opposition, beginning with Mr. Boulerice, who is sitting in for Mrs. Harel. Mr. Boulerice.

**Mr. Boulerice:** Dear friends, I say "dear friends" because, since my start in politics, I have been active in the area of culture for

which we share a passion. I will omit any comments and go straight to my question, Mr. Chairman. Dear Elizabeth: could you give me, based on the brief you presented and which I read attentively, very specific examples of how Canadian federal government intervention has impeded Québec's cultural development, and examples of how federal intervention has jeopardized objectives set by Québec for the development of its culture and cultural enterprises?

**Mr. Gauthier (Réel):** I'll start. Truly specific, clear examples are difficult to provide because, to understand the reality in all sectors, when it is a question of theatre, cinema or television production, it must be understood that the community must - take the case of cinema - obtain part of its funding from tax shelters which, for a number of years, were permitted by Ottawa, then cut and allowed by Québec, then it must meet with SODIC which has certain rules, then go to Téléfilm, reach an agreement with a private Québec broadcaster, then reach an agreement with Radio-Canada. These are complex measures which constantly require us to play by principles and criteria, which are not necessarily contradictory, but this perpetual confusion - you see it in theatre, you see it everywhere - and the obligation to be subject to so many conditions means that long-range planning, the entirety, if you will, of cultural production has never been given free rein or allowed to fulfil all its creative potential.

**Mrs. Chouvalidzé:** If I may, Mr. Boulerice, I would like to continue Mr. Gauthier's train of thought. Here is an example. Radio-Canada's budget is approved and allocated based on population figures rather than cultural needs, with the result that the French-language section of CBC receives so much less funding that we ask ourselves, in conclusion: Are Quebecers entitled to the same information as Canadians in the other nine provinces? For example, we know that the budget for "Le Point" - for the news is also a part of culture, is it not? - the budget for "Le Point" is one third of that allocated to "The Journal". Because there are fewer of us, we do not have the right to be as well informed.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Production budgets in general, and that is today's reality - in answer to Mr. Rémillard's question - today's concrete reality, French-language CBC's production budget approved by the Parliament, the budget slated for the English-language services is twice that of the French-language services. Now, in the system under which we live, it should be 50-50. The fact that we represent 28% or 29% of the population does not mean that we are entitled to only 28% or 29% of the budget. It seems to me

that this should have been obvious long ago. That's one example. (10:15 a.m.)

Where film policies, those of Telefilm Canada for example, are concerned, co-production agreements are signed, the Canadian government signs co-production agreements with France, under whose terms we will be co-producing English-language films with France. This is unacceptable and we are being asked, I was asked a few weeks ago by Québec producers, given these agreements, given the potential market that could open up, would you agree to having Union members dubbed in France? And this is because of agreements signed between the Canadian and foreign governments. This shows how important it is for us to sign our own international agreements, to decide what we want from, included in, a basic agreement, and to be able to sign international agreements, I think you will agree with me that powers are needed, and that means sovereignty.

**Mr. Boulerville:** Do I understand you to mean that, as concerns the Canada Council, this council is "Canadian" rather than "Pan-Canadian"?

**Mr. Demers:** It is true that the Council is indeed "Canadian", this is patently clear and we can cite many examples of overlapping structures with different legislation, which means that in the end it is impossible for Québec, in the current situation, to even begin planning or formulating a genuine cultural policy for ourselves, because we have no control over the ins and outs of each of the components of our cultural industries. So we find ourselves with a set of regulations in the area of film, formulated by Telefilm Canada, we find ourselves with another set of regulations issued by SOGIC, we have the Ministère des Affaires culturelles, which supposedly has jurisdiction over feature films, we have Communications Canada, which participates in international negotiations on feature films, we have this same Department with jurisdiction over television and, by the same token, over made-for-TV productions by independent film producers. This means that film producers who also produce for television are subject to federal jurisdiction and the attendant regulations on one hand, and to federal and provincial cultural affairs jurisdiction over feature films on the other. So, there you have it: wasted time and energy, lack of policies, lack of outlook, which in turn results in waste and the impossibility of formulating a genuine cultural policy.

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

**Mr. Parizeau:** First Mrs. Blackburn, Mr.

Chairman, if she may for a few minutes.

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

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you, Mr. Parizeau. First, I would like to thank you for having truly taken... for having raised the issue of sovereignty because, strangely enough, on this Commission, if you are in favour of sovereignty, you are accused, or likely to be accused, of partisanship. But if you side with federalism or the status quo, the same is not true. This is something I really have difficulty understanding, by what means we have come, as Quebecers, to believe that being in favour of sovereignty is tantamount to partisanship, and being in favour of federalism is not. An editorial which appeared during the last election campaign accused the Parti québécois of misleading us because they didn't provide a real alternative. So what we needed were two federalist parties to have a real choice? I would like you to comment quickly, because it is not immediately obvious to all Quebecers, on the importance of the cultural industry, and the return in dollars on each dollar invested in culture, ultimately, in creation and in spinoffs of all types.

**Mr. Turgeon:** In general... if we take a pie, which represents 100%, we will see that what the State invests in culture, and by "State" I mean the federal, provincial and municipal governments, because they also do their part, all this represents some 40% of all cultural investment. The other 60% comes, in large part, 58% of the market, from what you, as a member of the general public, pay when you buy a ticket to the theatre, when you go to the movies, etc. In other words, what the market invests. And finally, there is a very, very small proportion, maybe 2%, which is contributed by companies, corporations, patrons, when they have leftovers, they give their leftovers to culture, which in reality needs much more. This, then, is investment in a nutshell.

But what this also means is that the cultural world represents tens of thousands of jobs. This is significant. It means spinoffs of at least \$5.5 billion. When we fight to have a half-decent dubbing industry here, we are also fighting for hundreds of jobs, and I cannot understand why not a single government has ever come forward to defend this, whereas for an assembly line of 200 or 250 people, everyone is out in full force at the press conference, saying, "Bravo, isn't this great for the region". This is what I mean. The world of culture is also one of business, it also represents income for people. And it's not just that. Far be it from me to reduce culture to this, because culture is infinitely broader, it's everything we are and everything we want to be, in the way we want

to be.

**Mrs. Chouvalidzé:** I would like to add something, if I may. Recent figures prove that the dubbing market — since Serge Turgeon just referred to it — is a market, which we are in the process of losing, worth \$20 million. Here I am also thinking of not only the artist-performers doing the dubbing, but the technicians, the studios, the workers... and all the laboratories.

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

**Mr. Parizeau:** Ladies and gentlemen, a comment rather than a question in the few minutes which remain. Artists have long been at the centre of all of our society's important debates. It has often been stressed that the Quiet Revolution would never have been what it was without the artists and writers of Québec. Today, in the midst of the great debate on sovereignty, the artists find themselves once again at the centre, and playing, once more, an irreplaceable role in our society.

I fully concur when you emphasize the necessity for a culture as effervescent as ours, but with a population base which is, all things considered, quite limited, that all the powers, all the policies, all the support that we must be capable of giving the culture of a society as small as ours be in our hands. This seems to me to be pure logic. Any other formula is quite absurd.

This means however, that, to the extent that we orient ourselves towards sovereignty and full control of the policies and cultural levers which would be at our disposal, I have certain reservations regarding what you refer to, in your brief as, "negotiations with the future partners of Québec". It seems to me, in fact, that in cultural affairs, it is essential, at the moment of repatriation, to maintain, with respect to the rest of the world, a very great, indeed a vast degree of openness. In such a context, Canada becomes what I would call a sort of cultural space which holds no more than a historical importance. Other cultural spaces are as important, if not more so. It is clear that then, for example, we shall finally have the possibility to straighten out, to further, to establish with France and other French-speaking nations all types of relations which, in many cases, remain embryonic today.

It is not clear that the North American Anglophone market in its entirety is not considerably more important to Québec culture than that of English Canada. It may be far more important, in certain respects that the Montreal Symphony Orchestra go to New York rather than to Toronto. And, it is not at all clear that Michel Tremblay's plays penetrate English Canada

more easily than the United States, to give an good example of a contemporary Québec playwright whose works are being performed throughout North America...

**A voice:** Are you...

**Mr. Parizeau:** Pardon? Yes, yes. Of course.

And, in this sense I think that when we see a real potential arise for a sovereign Québec and for a Québec that can give its culture all these forms of support, then Québec artists will adopt an outlook marked by extraordinarily broad openness on the world. Clearly, much effort will be needed if the culture of a people of our size is to penetrate worldwide. We must not pretend to be what we are not, but should perhaps avoid setting objectives that may be, if you'll pardon the expression, too pointed or justified by history alone.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The comment is taking up the time available, Mr. Parizeau.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Listen, I simply want to say that we fully agree with that, and when we speak of openness, for example, where English Canada is concerned, it is with respect to...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Your agreement is once again using your time...

**Mr. Turgeon:** ...Francophones outside Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will now go on to the question period for the other members and I would remind you that it is 40 minutes long. Each of the speakers will be allowed 10 minutes. However, if we wish to get through the numerous requests and allow the Union des artistes to respond to the first requests that have not been covered, it would be useful for us to be brief in both our questions and our answers.

We will begin with Mr. Beaumier followed by Mr. Béland and Mr. Dufour. Mr. Beaumier.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One thing that may be said of the brief by the Union des artistes is that it evokes considerable reflection. The numbers suggested in it are surprising. I, for one, was enormously surprised. You suggest a figure of \$5 billion. Mr. Turgeon could you please break this down somewhat? You did put forth this figure but in which sphere? You made some mention of the municipalities being included.

**Mr. Turgeon:** That's right. Let's take the 1988-1989 figures, for instance. If we look at the

figures compiled for federal, provincial and municipal government spending, we are talking about something in the vicinity of \$1.72 billion: \$471 million by Québec, \$777 million by Canada, and \$166 million by the municipalities. On the other hand, the market, that is, ordinary citizens, invest \$2.754 billion in culture in Québec. And they say that corporate sponsors, patrons, etc. account for about \$800 million. Overall, that's the breakdown.

**Mr. Beaumier:** One last one. Should we find ourselves in an independent Québec, could this industry expand somewhat?

**Mr. Turgeon:** It can only expand; it can only grow, if only in the sense that Mr. Parizeau has just indicated. The creativity of Québec artists has already been proven. It is obvious that in a sovereign Québec, with a much more fertile environment more conducive to creativity - without this endless, tiresome overlapping of jurisdictions that wastes so much of our time, energy and money and, in the long run, saps our creative talents - it is obvious that we will put everything into creating. But, to do so - and I am speaking to the next government that will govern sovereignty - means that we Quebecers must adopt a genuine cultural policy, something we do not have at present, a cultural policy that is unrelated to what the ministère des Affaires culturelles is currently doing, a genuine cultural policy that combines the arts, culture and communications. This should become - as will be the case everywhere - perhaps the prime, the most important, in the profoundest sense, one of the key departments of a sovereign government.

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

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I must tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that your brief was of much interest to me too. First, the result of your referendum; the least that can be said is that the question was clear. You know that in the case of our survey, certain members of the Commission and others have indicated that our own survey, our consultation, was biased. I'm sorry about this because, maybe, with a clear question, I would have obtained your results. We only scored 85%.

My question concerns a topic which has not been discussed much in the briefs that have been submitted up to now: the question of communications. Yours is one of the few briefs that emphasizes the importance of the field of communications. On page 9, you say: "The natural link between culture and the arts highlights the strategic importance of communications..." I would like to know whether the Union des artistes has conducted specific studies on this subject because, as I was saying, the

Commission doesn't have much information on the topic. Has the Union des artistes studied this question and could it tell us more about it?

**Mr. Turgeon:** We did not carry out an exhaustive study on the issue but, since we are involved in this crucially important sector, we know... and I think that the figures are public ones, which the ministère des Communications du Québec could give you. In Québec, communications is a \$7-billion business, communications alone. Of this, the communications that are closely related to our sector, the cultural sector, represent some \$2 billion or \$2.1 billion, leaving \$5 billion for the rest of the communications sector as a whole. We say it is vital, if we truly want to possess all the levers of a real cultural policy, to control, to have full jurisdiction in the field of communications. And I wonder, Mr. Béland, I wonder, Mr. Chairman, since the issue is fundamental for the future of Québec, whether this Commission should not one day institute some sort of a forum devoted to communications that would enable us to debate the issue with all those involved. It seems to me this is one of the fundamental, major issues for a sovereign Québec and for the future of Québec.

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

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me begin by thanking the Union des artistes for its thoughts. I greatly appreciated your emphasis on the economic aspect. I listened to Mrs. Chouvaldzé speaking of the artists as entrepreneurs. I remember the debate surrounding the act on the status of artists, with which we had also been associated, and it is clear that, as far as we are concerned, you are true entrepreneurs.  
(10:30)

My question is as follows: In your brief, you repeatedly mention the difficulties you experience here in Québec. At one point, you describe how responsibilities are shared between the MAC and the ministère des Communications. You mention the publicity budget, for instance, for which the ministère des Communications is responsible, and you tell us that the MAC is only responsible for 10% to 20% of all subsidized activities. In another part of your brief, you say that the federal government gives Québec about \$830 million for various projects. You state that we'll have to repatriate this \$830 million. My question, after reading a great many briefs is as follows: People in education are asking for money in a new Québec. People in social affairs are asking for money in a new Québec. Everybody is asking for money. I trust you, Mr. Turgeon, as a pressure group, I know you well. But how are you going to work things to prevent this \$830 million from going into the consolida-



ted fund?

**Mr. Turgeon:** That's the whole point, Mr. Dufour. The money isn't going to individuals, it's going to culture. And you're as much a part of culture as I, or anyone else. This is the prime reason for setting up an actual department and an actual policy to strengthen and affirm the identity and unity of Quebecers as a whole. We must ensure a minimum. UNESCO provides figures: for a population of 7 million — under 15 million — so with 7 million as is our case, the government, as a decent minimum, should allocate at least 1% of its national budget to the arts sector. This is a minimum contribution to set up policies to develop our language, heritage, and traditions, to enhance our international influence, as mentioned earlier, to integrate, so to speak, all economic and technological aspects, to foster accessibility, diffusion, education, to strengthen the cooperation between all involved, whether in the private or public sector. This is why it is fundamental to have a minimum, and we think that this \$830 million to be repatriated is part of the minimum required to reassure and define who we are. It is culture that makes us "us" and not someone else. This is why it is crucial to invest in it. Otherwise what's the point of sovereignty, if everything is flattened out and we end up like everyone else and without a personality?

**Mr. Dufour:** Coming back to economics, Mr. Turgeon, why do you set apart the \$5.5 billion budget, just mentioned, from culture, and then talk about the budget for publicity of some \$6 billion, not the budget, the total expenditures...

**Mr. Turgeon:** Budget for what? I didn't hear. Budget for publicity?

**Mr. Dufour:** You say that the cultural activities, I'm sorry, represent approximately \$5.5 billion...

**Mr. Turgeon:** Yes.

**Mr. Dufour:** ...and that activities related to publicity represent approximately \$6 billion...

**Mr. Turgeon:** Not publicity, I said communications, the entire communications sector, which includes teleinformatics and all that, it's \$7 billion, but of that \$7 billion, \$2 billion, \$2.1 billion, is for Radio-Québec and other sectors more closely related to culture.

**Mr. Dufour:** No, I think accuracy is important. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Proulx, followed by Mr. Hogue and Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Proulx:**

**Mr. Proulx:** Well, as is often said: since culture and agriculture are similar in many ways, I was very pleased to read your brief, and I am doubly pleased to hear it summarized this morning, because we realize that we very often limit our concept of culture to entertainment and I, personally, find it very important that all its aspects be stressed, particularly the economic aspect, to try to eliminate certain preconceived notions which are still all too prevalent among the public. Because, we should not forget that our culture is our way of being, it is our way of seeing, thinking, acting, but especially of judging, and the problem may be that, just as for agriculture once again, we take it for granted because we live with it on a day-to-day basis and consider it relatively unimportant. So, as our discussions progress, positions become clearer and this leads us, of course, to realize, especially in the last few days, that scarecrows are beginning to surface and that lame, insidious comparisons are cropping up, and I imagine this is to distort the true debate that should be held, particularly here at the Commission. There is a word... My question is to have you clarify a word that bothers me in your brief because it might be used for other purposes, I think, than what you intended, that is when you speak about a natural state. What do you mean by "natural state"?

**Mr. Turgeon:** Sovereignty, a natural state. It's a lovely expression. Before going any further, I'll tell you, Mr. Proulx, that you are right to say that culture and agriculture get on well. In our respective worlds, we know what roots are. The well-known American poet B.T. Washington said that a society will never be a society if it does not learn that there is as much dignity in cultivating a field as there is in composing a poem. We feel that "sovereignty, a natural state" is a way of saying that Québec is a natural State for sovereignty. It's a way of saying that men and women of Québec, just like any group of people in the world, can aspire to something which is not only logical, but also historical. It's a way of saying that Québec covers one of the world's largest territories. We rank eighteenth in size. It's a way of saying that Québec is one of the most developed and wealthiest societies in the world and that nobody, least of all me, wants to part with this standard of living, and that nobody should have to.

It's a way of saying that we in Québec have a language of our own, that we have a history of our own and, above all, that there is a common will among Quebecers to live and do business together.

It's a way of saying that we have vast natural resources, manpower potential, here at

home, which is one of the most extraordinary and highly qualified, that we have modern businesses and that, together, we simply want to make a choice that will free us, take a certain risk, if you wish. People spoke of "the wonderful risk" [Translator's note: slogan of former PQ leader Pierre-Marc Johnson for a less radical form of sovereignty-association] a few years ago, so let us speak now of the very wonderful risk there is for us to run.

**Mr. Proulx:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Hogue, followed by Mr. Bouchard and Mr. Quillet. They tell me that microphones here in Montréal are less sensitive than those in the Salon Rouge in Québec City. So would all speakers please speak closer to the mike.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Québec's well-known sensitivity is less sensitive in Montréal.

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

**Mr. Hogue:** I'm from Outremont. According to Louis Laberge, it seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that we met in Ottawa when I had the pleasure of chairing the commission on the status of the artist. At that time, I think I was hearing slightly different things. Within a month and a half, we succeeded in having a bill passed, after working in close cooperation to have the status of the artist recognized throughout a land called Canada. I'm wondering about this discrepancy between the text of your speech and the discussions we had.

**Mr. Turgeon:** You want to talk about discrepancy, well, let's talk about it right now... O.K.

**Mr. Hogue:** Let me go on just a bit, please, because we don't have much time. Clearly, you haven't beaten around the bush and your brief is objective and non-partisan. Therefore, I will leave it to the Minister to edit certain facts, if he is able to, especially in economic terms. But, Mr. Turgeon, I would like you to reassure me, as a Montrealer, a Quebecer, old stock, etc., to reassure me of my own roots so that I can tell my children about them.

When I read your document, I thought all along about the beauty and purity of the statements, but above all about your position, which I would call ideological. You answered Mr. Rémillard that it is unthinkable to share jurisdictions, or to work jointly on the cultural plane. Your answer is a categorical "no", and I am prepared to share this position. But I wish

you could reassure me. A society is a whole, and its parts cannot be dissociated. Canada was a society. It still is, as long as we are together. This separation would cut a basic root, that of agriculture, about which you have just answered Mr. Proulx. Ethnic groups in Québec or Canada, and I tie this in with your constitutional preamble, in which you demand separation, pure but not hardline, for reasons of protection. So you imply that dominated peoples have lost their culture, whereas I, in psychology, learned that dominated peoples could surpass themselves and continue to survive precisely through their culture. You have heard, since the beginning of the Commission's proceedings, that culture takes precedence over economics, even in my own teaching. But if we push the process to extremes as you are doing with the federal government, then, with this separation, we'll end up establishing a pure culture, as you mentioned just now, a non-hybrid one. In a word, a pure race. I would like to have your reassurance on that, Mr. Turgeon.

**Mr. Turgeon:** First, I want to tell you just one thing, there is no discrepancy, no lack of coherence in the fact that we asked Ottawa for a status of the artist similar to the status we had received from Québec, or that we fought in Ottawa for a decent copyright law. As long as we are part of the system, we are going to go and ask for what we need wherever we have to...

**Mr. Hogue:** That's fine with me.

**Mr. Turgeon:** That's fine with you?

**Mr. Hogue:** Perfectly.

**Mr. Turgeon:** O.K. then. Secondly...

**Mr. Hogue:** I talked only about the speech.

**Mr. Turgeon:** When we speak... When we say that the parts of a whole cannot be taken apart, that you cannot sever the body from the soul, the person for us, the entity, is Québec. There is a fundamental difference if you look at Québec and if you look at Canada. You raise the problem, the example of the ethnic groups. There is a world of difference between the ethnic groups who want to come and live in Québec and who will be integrated into Québec's culture, and those who want to go and live in Canada and who will be integrated into some other form of Canadian multiculturalism. This is where the difference lies. It's a matter of the entity, where do we fit in? Mr. Hogue, you who have studied philosophy...

**Mr. Hogue:** Psychology.

**Mr. Turgeon:** ...and you mention it often, or

psychology, you should know that what differentiates beings and things, the first thing that differentiates them, is the place they occupy. These two glasses are identical. They're the same. What differentiates them is the place they occupy. In the debate occupying, or preoccupying us, right now, what we want to pin down is Québec's place, the place of the people of Québec...

**Mr. Hogue:** Mr. Turgeon, you are not answering...

**Mr. Turgeon:** ...and it is in relation to Québec that the whole debate will unfold.

**Mr. Hogue:** You are not answering my question. I asked you a single question, about cultural osmosis...

**Mr. Demers:** If you please, Mr. Hogue, your question includes an insidious statement...

**Mr. Hogue:** It's "my" question, you know.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Please... Mr. Hogue will restate his question, and you will continue with your answer. Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Hogue:** I want an answer. Culture is necessarily osmosis.

**Mr. Turgeon:** I beg your pardon?

**Mr. Hogue:** Culture is also osmosis. There's no way around it. Québec wasn't built only by people of French-speaking descent, and so on and so forth.

**Mr. Turgeon:** We never said that.

**Mr. Hogue:** Culture is osmosis. I want to know, in your words, I want you to give me some reassurance, me as a French Canadian, because there is some interbreeding in the culture too...

**Mr. Demers:** You have...

**Mr. Hogue:** ...since there is continuous, ongoing intervention. Canada is a society. If you cut one root, you cut a part of "my" culture, which I have acquired, like everyone else, through osmosis. I bring up the notion and the fact of ethnic groups, and I say: If you go as far as you are now with the federal government - because you're certainly going all the way, and so I allow myself to do the same - then, with this separation, we'll end up establishing a pure, non-hybrid form of culture. In a word, we will be establishing a pure race. Answer "no" and I will be satisfied.

**Mr. Demers:** You'll get your answer: it's quite simple. First, the parallel you're drawing between a pure culture, a concept which was nowhere mentioned in our brief, and a pure race, makes your question insidious and dangerous. Second, Québec culture, the culture of French-speaking Quebecers, the culture of the Québec people, has always been a very open culture, towards Québec's ethnic minorities and international cultures. The culture of French-speaking Quebecers is influenced by the North American and European cultures, especially the Francophone culture of France and Europe. We live in these two streams of influence and have assimilated them thoroughly; this is what makes our culture unique. And I must say that the American culture has had much more influence on us than the English-Canadian culture, which is trying to find itself and to find its place with respect to American culture. Our cultural roots are in Québec. We are not cutting any roots with Canada. Canada is an artificial country, and that's what we are now realizing.

Anglo-Canadians, English Canadians are trying to find themselves, are trying to define themselves. "We" have our culture, and we have defined ourselves. So there is no exclusion on our part. There is openness and receptiveness in the sense of dynamism in our culture. (10:45 a.m.)

**Mr. Hogue:** Mr. Chairman, I am fully satisfied with the answer.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Hogue. Mr. Bouchard, followed by Mr. Ouellet and Mr. Poitras.

**Mr. Bouchard:** I want to thank Mr. Turgeon for the wonderful brief you have submitted and which seems to me to be totally consistent with Québec's artists and creators. There are many of us and, I believe, we are all aware that sovereignty was first the dream of artists and creators, who have supported it against all odds for decades, for generations. This is why it is a paradox, as you put it, that so many individuals from economic sectors are present here, compared to a small number of artists, writers, creators, like you. In fact, you are the only one. At first glance, it would seem that you are right. Personally, I think one has to recognize, and to realize that, after all, we have an impressive number of bankers, businesspeople, economists, accountants and lawyers here, but only one person representing the cultural sector. This, at first glance, is surprising.

One can argue however, if you allow me... I do not wish to totally justify the Commission's composition, but one might say that it's as if the population of Québec, the people of Québec, after giving birth to the sovereignty you awakened in it, that this population, since it now wants sovereignty, is turning more towards

businesspeople, asking them to make it possible. This leads to the enormous responsibility which now rests on the shoulders of businesspeople, who have become the symbol of Québec's success. This brings with it responsibilities. And now the population, which trusts them and knows that businesspeople are able to succeed, is virtually asking them to succeed on its behalf, with the sovereignty of Québec. This is why I think there are so many businesspeople on the Commission, because we are, so to speak, at the interdependency stage. How can independence be achieved? People know that it also depends on the economy. This is why these people are here in such large numbers and why there is such a weight on their shoulders.

The other comment I would like to make is about this gratitude we are encouraged to feel towards Ottawa, for everything it's done for the arts. True, it's done a lot of things, and a lot of good things. But, correct me if I'm wrong, I think they did it with our money. And they did it in our stead too, to a large extent, because, in general, our governments in Québec City have never understood the importance of culture, have never allocated the necessary resources. And also perhaps because there was a sort of parasite mentality with people saying: Ottawa is ready to invest; let's let Ottawa invest in culture. Culture is interchangeable, whether we do it or Ottawa does it, it's the same: a sort of distorted perception of what culture truly is. This also allowed Ottawa to play the wolf boasting about how it protects the sheep in the cultural field, and explains the disastrous situation we're in now for having abandoned our culture to others.

Which leads me, somewhat illogically, since I am now going to ask a question, Mr. Chairman, which leads me to a question about the brief itself, a question which, in a way, worries me. It's on page 100 of the brief. Earlier, Mr. Rémillard suggested a certain ambiguity that might arise from this passage, where you start by stating very clearly the principle of prohibiting negotiations on power sharing. For you, it must be a fait accompli - we affirm sovereignty and then we sort it out.

**Mr. Turgeon:** We can negotiate.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Yes, except you refer briefly to the opportunity of creating a decision-making body, a sort of common structure which would be responsible for making certain decisions, and there people might wonder, and I certainly do, are you not creating a political superstructure...

**A voice:** No.

**Mr. Bouchard:** ...that would do more than manage and that would be called upon to make decisions. I want to give you the opportunity to shed some light on this question.

**Mr. Demers:** Indeed, if I may. In our mind this part of the brief refers mainly to the services we think the minorities outside Québec must continue to receive and which the English-speaking minority in Québec must continue to receive. And in that sense, we think there should be negotiation between Québec and Canada to see whether we couldn't jointly set up mechanisms and a structure aimed at establishing reciprocity agreements, if you like, so that we in Québec can sustain the French-speaking minorities outside Québec, and English Canada as a whole can sustain - and I'm thinking here among other things through television, public television - via the CBC, the English-speaking minority in Québec. What we said in the brief was said mainly in that spirit.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Ouellet?

**Mr. Turgeon:** May I answer before he asks the question?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Yes, certainly.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You still have some time left.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Then I'll answer the question before he asks it.

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

**Mr. Ouellet:** So he'll ask himself the answer.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Ouellet, do you want to have an answer before you ask the question?

**Mr. Ouellet:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin by telling Mr. Turgeon how much I admire his exceptional artistic qualities. A number of my friends are members of your Union and so I can also speak of my admiration for you as president of the Union des artistes. But that's where it goes sour, because beyond your artistic, professional work, it's obvious that when you jump into the political arena, I agree a little less, and would rather have you on my side because you're a very good debater. I read your report, which is a clear call for independence, an extremely eloquent plea for sovereignty, and I respect this point of view. I'm all for your expressing it on behalf of those you represent. I

must point out, however, that there are contradictions in your systematic attack on federal cultural policies. Earlier, Mr. Rémillard quoted a sentence on page 21 of your report where you say that the people of Québec are gradually losing control of the principle elements sustaining their culture. However, in the conclusions to your report you maintain that institutions such as Radio-Canada, the Canada Council, the National Film Board, Film Canada (sic), would have to be repatriated in an independent Québec. I'm referring to page 38 of your report. Is this, then, basically an acknowledgement of the key role these institutions play for Québec, in the present federation, and, something of a refutation of your report by yourself? Do you not recognize de facto that these federal institutions have played a considerable role in helping the artists and creators you represent? And I'd ask you: Which, among these federal institutions, has served the Canadian State better than it has served the artists and creators you represent?

**Mr. Turgeon:** I would say that perhaps it is mostly the artists who have served the State, as you say, by means of these federal institutions. Let's take the case of Radio-Canada, an example no one will have any trouble understanding. Radio-Canada... it's true, there was a time when it was the only public television station. Radio-Canada has been an extraordinary means of diffusing the French culture, but who made Radio-Canada? Is it Ottawa that made the French CBC or is it the artists who work at Radio-Canada? And I'd ask you: Is it Radio-Canada that made René Lévesque, the commentator? Is it Radio-Canada that made Jean Duceppe, or anyone else? Isn't it rather René Lévesque, Jean Duceppe and company who made Radio-Canada? Proof of that, Mr. Ouellet, is that English Canada is part of the same structure as the rest of us, and English-Canadian television has not gotten anywhere near the same results as French-Canadian television. I conclude, therefore, that there is no common denominator there which made things, and that it is the personality, imagination, and creativity of Québec creators that fashioned the television station we ended up with.

**Mr. Ouellet:** I agree entirely. And it is because I agree that I go further with my question and ask: What is it that, in the current context, prevents creators from creating, and artists from performing? What is stifling you?

**Mr. Turgeon:** A kind of yoke, poorly defined, poorly shared jurisdiction, lack of full control over these communication policies. There are regulations, for example, dictated by Ottawa, which have an obvious affect on the production or broadcasting of Québec television. There are many areas like that. I gave you examples in

cinema, but the same is true for museums. There are museums... There is a museum policy dictated by Ottawa and there is one dictated by Québec City. It's absolutely absurd. I mean, you can't know what to do. You have all that.

**Mr. Ouellet:** But let's talk...

**Mr. Turgeon:** ...so we need a policy. That means, Mr. Ouellet, that means that this sphere must belong to only one government. And when we say repatriate, it is not in the sense of repatriate because everything is good and we want it, but because we don't want someone else coming and putting their feet or nose in our jurisdiction any more.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Yes, but your answer is general. What I would say is that, individually, the creators, the artists of Québec have been enormously successful, independent of the structure. You say that perhaps they would be more creative in a sovereign Québec. Perhaps. But I tell you, in the present form, in Canadian federalism, there is only great success, and your response, strikes me as general rather than being specific. I notice that there has been and continues to be much success among our artists, and it is not the federal structure which prevents them from creating. It is not the federal structure which prevents them from succeeding. Let's take a specific case. You, Mr. Turgeon, what haven't you been able to do in Canada that you would have been able to do sovereign?

**Mr. Turgeon:** What I have not been able to do, is because I was taking too much time for the Union des artistes... It's because of that that I haven't had the time to take care of that.

**Mr. Ouellet:** No, but what...

**Mr. Turgeon:** I am going to give you specific examples, Mr. Demers.

**Mr. Ouellet:** No, but what would you have been able to do sovereign?

**Mr. Demers:** If I may, I think the question...

**Mr. Ouellet:** Is Mr. Demers going to answer for you?

**Mr. Demers:** I think the question is poorly put. It must be asked within the framework of whether we agree that it is essential and fundamental that Québec be endowed with a cultural policy? If we answer "yes" to this question, it is impossible to be endowed with a real cultural policy without controlling the instruments that allow us to bring it about. If we conclude that we don't need a cultural

policy, I'll go in your direction. Then Ottawa will do what it can with the money and circumstances of the moment, and Québec will do what it can with the money and circumstances of the moment. We might not always go in the same direction and might even go in opposite directions. But if we agree that it is imperative to have a cultural policy, then we must give ourselves the tools, the levers for having one.

The levers are, firstly, the spheres of jurisdiction that we must control, and, secondly, the economic levers which will enable us - and I use an expression I heard yesterday and which applies as well to our field - to plan strategically. For the time being, we do not possess these levers, and it is essential that we get them, because, more and more, we are being torn apart by contradictory policies which respond less and less to our cultural development needs here in Québec. The question that we must ask is: Do we want a real cultural policy or not? (11:00 a.m.)

**Mr. Ouellet:** Clearly, Mr. Demers, the examples are numerous. Québec's cultural milieu has been able to knock on two doors and, on many occasions, when it knocked on one door and didn't get what it wanted, it went to the other door and got it. The possibility of going to knock on the federal door has allowed many Québec cultural organizations to survive and thrive.

**Mr. Demers:** But that's what we don't want any more, Mr. Ouellet.

**Mr. Ouellet:** O.K., but...

**Mr. Demers:** It's this kind of bargaining that we don't want any more...

**Mr. Ouellet:** It's not bargaining...

**Mr. Demers:** ...not only in terms of...

**Mr. Ouellet:** ...it's being open...

**Mr. Demers:** Are you kidding?

**Mr. Ouellet:** ...to artists who work in Québec and Canada in French.

**Mr. Demers:** That becomes bargaining in all areas. It becomes faltering policies and, in the end, and Mr. Hogue, sometimes, in his remarks, I see that it's a little... we become schizophrenic in the end from walking to one side, going to knock here, going to knock there, and playing them one against the other. Impossible! We don't want that any more.

**A voice:** That's pretty paranoid.

**Mr. Demers:** That's the level of maturity

we're reaching. Paranoia is over and above.

**A voice:** All the tendencies toward paranoia are evident.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Poissant, you have the floor.

**A voice:** Anyway, we're not there. We'll get there at some point...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Poissant.

**Mr. Poissant:** Mr. Chairman, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Turgeon, for having referred to our pulp and paper industry which has the privilege, if I may say so, of taking our natural resources, processing them and seeing to it that we help the blossoming of Québec culture. We process them and export them in large quantity. It was said, at the opening, that it was the largest exportation industry in Québec, which means that we convert our natural resources to allow us to buy artwork, go see plays, etc.

Now, the only point about which I want to question you, Mr. Turgeon - there are many obviously - is the issue of immigration. We have often been told that we have a population problem in Québec and you say that it is critical. On page 14: the only way to compensate for it is through the birthrate; the other, is through immigration. Mr. Turgeon, my experience is the following: we can choose our immigrants, but immigrants do not necessarily choose us and, before going into a country, the first questions an immigrant asks himself are: firstly, what is the economic climate there? Because I exclude extremists, refugees and wealthy businesspeople who come to establish themselves in Canada or in Québec. So, economic climate. Since I don't have a job at home, I'll go into a country where my chances of finding one are greater. Secondly, a quiet, acceptable political climate. One doesn't go into a country where, usually, one knows one will be poorly received. Right? Thirdly, mobility. And only fourthly, language. One chooses the advantage of mobility only if, in going to a country, there are linguistic constraints, perhaps I'll go to the next town because I'm looking for a job which I don't have at home and I'm going to see to it that the mobility might allow me, if I must learn a second language, perhaps that this second language will stand me in good stead elsewhere.

We are often told that immigration is going to make up for our problem. And it's true as you say that coming to Montréal... the problem of immigration in Montréal, is a serious problem. My children ask themselves the question, Mr. Chairman. Will my children marry Asians, for example? I have nothing against them. I think they are welcome, they are well accepted and all

that. But the problem of culture and language, as we want it, as you want it, is not solved once and for all just because you say so. And I think that Quebecers should know exactly what the problem of immigration is. And it isn't because Québec separates that we will have advantages.

I think, on the contrary, Mr. Turgeon, that in a separated Québec, there will be no more mobility, where I am no longer a Canadian but a Quebecer when I come home, there may be a danger of Francophones, the well-to-do ones coming to Québec. Perhaps they will ask themselves a second question, namely, Mr. Chairman, how many well-to-do French have come to settle in Québec? Come on, it's not hard. They spoke the language. But how many came because it was a way in, maybe in order to go elsewhere afterwards? We must ask this question. Moreover, tomorrow, when you are with us, back in our camp, we'll have to study this possibility. I'm sorry, it's a long statement for a short question.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The time for the members has lapsed, but we'll take five minutes of the Chair's time, proving it's usual humility.

**Mr. Turgeon:** I see where you're coming from. I don't share your fears, Mr. Poissant. I understand them, but I don't share them. In the first place, I think that if before arriving here or in their respective countries, immigrants knew more about Québec, if they knew Québec better, if Québec had its own sphere of influence internationally in order to make itself known, these people would know what they are choosing in coming to Québec.

The language problem is not my problem, it's not the artists' problem. The French language problem is a problem for 83% of the citizens of Québec. That's all. No one is unwelcome. Our friend Libman can continue to speak English at home, there's no problem. All we say is that French is the common language of Québec. If that doesn't suit you, don't come. If you agree then, that in Québec, the common language is French; in Spain, the common language is Spanish; in Yugoslavia, the common language is Yugoslavian (sic), why would it be outrageous to have a common language which is French? That's all we are saying, and we go a step further. Since you have thoroughly read our report, you will note that we are very respectful of the rights of minorities and the rights of different ethnic groups.

I think that the Anglophone minority enjoys vested rights here that it will be the responsibility of a sovereign Québec to safeguard and protect, and even to expand if need be. As for the different ethnic groups, we will have to invent a policy of integration into the Francophone majority. But integration doesn't mean assimilation. Integration occurs in a context of

respect for different cultures. And these people will have every interest in coming to live in an economically and culturally sound country showing no ambivalence, ambiguity, or confusion.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** In the few minutes remaining to the Chair, could we ask Mrs. Chouvalidzé to say a few words on this subject?

**Mrs. Chouvalidzé:** I think I am a perfect example of integration.

**A voice:** She's a Russian!

**Mrs. Chouvalidzé:** My mother tongue is Russian. I was born to Russian parents. I was raised... until my early teens... I was 14 years old when I arrived in Québec, I was raised in France, in French, where I was always treated as a foreigner, and I was born there. I arrived in Québec when I was 14, I was accepted. No one ever made me feel like I was a foreigner. I became a Québec actress through the generosity of Father Legault who discovered me in school. I am now Vice-President of the Union des artistes, and I am happy to be thanking Québec in this way for having given me so much more than I ever expected. And I speak French, which doesn't prevent me from speaking Russian or from speaking English, sir.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, madam. We have now run out of the time we had put aside for this very interesting presentation. On behalf of the Commission, I would like to thank you all, Mrs. Pinsonneault, Mr. Gauthier, Mrs. Côté, Mr. Demers, Mrs. Chouvalidzé, and you too, Mr. Turgeon. I would ask you to be kind enough to hurry toward the exit so that you may be congratulated outside and the next group may enter relatively quickly.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:09 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 11:15 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** If you would take your seats, we will now welcome the Bureau de commerce de Montréal, the Montréal Board of Trade. The presentation will be led by Mr. Leduc. Mr. Leduc is going to begin by introducing the people accompanying him, and will then take 10 minutes to present the brief which has already been received and read by the members of the Commission. We will then begin the question periods in blocks, with 20 minutes for the representatives of the two major parliamentary groups, and 40 minutes for the other members.

Mr. Leduc, would you please introduce those who have accompanied you and present your brief.

**Montréal Board of Trade – Bureau  
de commerce de Montréal**

**Mr. Leduc (Marc A.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my far left, Alex Harper, Executive Vice-President of the Board of Trade; to my left, Dave Powell, Vice-President of the Board of Trade; on my far right, Guy Djandji, Treasurer of the Board of Trade; and Luigi Liberatore, Vice-President of the Board of Trade. Mr. Chairman, all of us are members of the executive, and I myself am Chairman of the Board as well as a member of the executive.

Messrs. Chairmen, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, the Board of Trade, as you know, is first and foremost an organization joining businesspeople from all areas of endeavour in the greater Montréal region to make it easier for its members to engage in trade and do business in general. Obviously, we are not an organization specializing in constitutional matters, I admit that freely here this morning. Today, the Montréal Board of Trade is the second largest association in the Canadian Chamber of Commerce network, and the largest in Québec. The Board of Trade counts some 3000 corporations among its members and, from these, 7000 delegates. These delegates are divided as follows: 50% Francophone and 50% Anglophone and persons whose mother tongue is neither French nor English. For quite some time now, The Montréal Board of Trade, has carried out all its business in both the official language of Québec, French, and the language of business in North America, English.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we appear here before you, we must tell you, on behalf of our members, that The Montréal Board of Trade is not satisfied with Québec's position within the Canadian federal structure. This is nothing new. The Board of Trade fights to defend Quebecers' interests and fights for major changes in the relationship between Québec and the rest of Canada. Most of you are probably aware of our strong public support of the Meech Lake Accord and of our untiring efforts on its behalf. As Quebecers, we were devastated by its failure.

The presentation we are making this morning does not smack of naïveté; we have not buried our heads in the sand. In our brief, we set out guidelines which we feel would allow Quebecers to continue within the same economic context and democratic system and to develop their own personality and business interests. The Montréal Board of Trade firmly believes that Québec's future as a distinct society and prosperous economy lies within a reworked Canadian federation. If the rejection of the Meech Lake Accord is a failure on the constitutional level, should we assume that any constitutional reform within the Confederation is impossible?

Let's briefly examine, and this is our point of view, the failure of Meech Lake from a purely technical perspective. Of course there are political aspects, but from a technical point of view, 9 of 11 Canadian parliaments, representing 93 % of the population of Canada, approved the accord. Some complain about the need for unanimity to change the Constitution, some maintain that constitutional reform is impossible within the current legal structure. We suggest to these people that it might be useful to reread the Canadian Constitution. It seems to us that many of the transfers of jurisdiction suggested to this Commission by previous speakers could be realized within the context of the existing Constitution. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, the Montréal Board of Trade continues to believe, despite our great disappointment over the Meech Lake Accord, that Québec must continue its attempts to attain these objectives, that is, a distinct society and a prosperous economy within a Canadian federal system which better reflects reality.

In our brief, you will see that we touched on several general economic issues, a description of the elements of a favourable business climate, the government debt crisis, the changing population, the changing global context and the effect of the Constitution on the Canadian economy.

Let's move on to the language issue. The Montréal Board of Trade recognizes and appreciates the French character of Québec and the need to promote it. We also favour policies that will let Québec benefit fully from the dynamism and business talents of the Francophone community, the Anglophone community and, more and more, from the talents of those whose mother tongue is neither French nor English. We would like to say that we are fully aware of the urgent need for constitutional reform. In fact, all the energy Québec has had to devote since 1960, since Jean Lesage and his attempts at explaining Québec to the rest of Canada, up to the recent discussion about the minimum that must be done to remain part of the federal pact, are energies Québec could not use elsewhere. The Board of Trade regrets, deeply regrets, that today, after 30 years of explaining, we are still in the same position. We repeat this message to the rest of Canada this morning, Messrs. Chairmen, et il le dit au reste du Canada ce matin, MM. les Présidents.

We want to attest to the exceptional economic growth that has occurred in Québec for the past 10 years – in keeping with Canadian economic growth, which is among the strongest in the world – and we believe that the federal context, from the viewpoint of the marketplace and from other points of view, has fostered this growth. This does not allow us, however, to close our eyes to the serious flaws in the Canadian federal system.

One of the most pressing problems is the



public debt, both federal and provincial. It must be resolved without delay. We are convinced that different currencies would lead to considerable conversion costs, for all financial arrangements as well as other things, such as Québec's share of the national debt.

The national fiscal structure must remain an efficient mechanism for income balancing in times of divergent economic conditions between the various regions of Canada, by means of equalization payments and other measures. Harmonization of regulations, in general, and taxation, in particular, must, in our opinion, extend to other economic sectors, such as tax policy and administration. In the field of international trade, our membership in global organizations like the Group of Seven and the Group of Ten allows Canada to participate in formulating a vast gamut of international economic policies. These are the assets that we wish to retain, and which would be difficult to retain if the country were threatened by separation.

Several speakers before the Commission presented lists of powers which should, according to them, fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of Québec. In our brief, we look at immigration and manpower training, and we would be willing to explore these issues, if you wish, during the question period.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, before closing, this is the first time the Commission is sitting in the Montréal area, in the heartland of the Québec economy. The constitutional option we choose will have considerable impact on the region. We wish to assure ourselves a place of honour in the restructured global economy. We would ask you, during debate, not to forget the needs of the Montréal region if it is to fulfil its unique role.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, Québec is not alone in calling for changes. Even Ontario, two days ago, indicated that it is going to call for change. There is consensus in other regions as well, a feeling that the federal decision-making process, regardless of the political party in power, constantly and flagrantly promotes regional differences. As Quebecers, it will be up to us to decide if a better future lies within a renewed Confederation, as a separate sovereign state, or somewhere in between. Any decision we make as Quebecers requires negotiation with our neighbours, Messrs. Chairmen. Such negotiation cannot be bypassed because any association, of any type, is not only inevitable, but essential within the context of a global economy. A federation is an association, a partnership. Those of us in the business world believe we understand the concept of partnership. To be effective, a partnership must be fair, and must entail an equal sharing of rights and responsibilities...

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

Leduc...

**Mr. Leduc:** Yes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Your time is up, but I will give you 30 seconds to finish your sentence.

**Mr. Leduc:** O.K. We believe that to establish a partnership where everyone will benefit, everyone must exhibit generosity. This will take time, it will be difficult, but it is worth the effort. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you Mr. Leduc. This time we will begin discussion with questions from the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition. Mr. Parizeau.

**Mr. Parizeau:** Mr. Leduc, in your brief, you focussed on four main constitutional possibilities, according to your text. First, rearrangement and adaptation of the Canadian federation; second, sovereignty for Québec with a new supranational structure formally linking Québec to the rest of Canada; third, sovereignty for Québec with close economic association with Canada but no formal shared or joint government structure; fourth, independence for Québec with a weak economic association with Canada. You reject the fourth, you reject the third... I am working backwards. As for the second, I mean sovereignty for Québec with a new supranational structure that would ensure an official link, you say on page 18: "It may assume either that the other Canadian provinces would be one bloc and Québec the other within the supranational institution - which probably is not realistic having in mind the differences among the other provinces, or it may assume that all provinces would have greatly increased powers in which case the "supranational" authority would simply amount to a greatly weakened version of the existing federal government, one so weak as to preclude it from preserving the economic foundations of the Confederation..."

The question is important, because this supranational structure has been discussed for some time in our field. In your opinion, and in this regard you are a witness with certain advantages in that you represent a good number of the Anglophone business circles in Québec, and thus have an idea of the situation in the rest of English Canada, this supranational structure in your opinion, hasn't got the least chance of being accepted by the rest of Canada? Is it, in your opinion, totally unrealistic, to use your term?

**Mr. Leduc:** Mr. Parizeau, we are not saying it is totally out of the question, we are saying

that there are certain risks in establishing this type of supranational structure, as we understand it. It threatens to result either in an association which is imbalanced, or an association with a future of unstable equilibrium. This result would run contrary to the cautious approach we are seeking, because one of the principles we are trying to uphold in the new structure is economic strengthening of the Confederation, while permitting a distribution of powers beneficial to everyone.

**Mr. Parizeau:** Then we are left with your first option, a sort of renewed federalism. On page 24, you suggest that within the framework of this renewed federalism, education, culture, communications, immigration, labour, manpower, unemployment insurance, regional economic development, financial services and institutions — I don't know if this includes banks as well, but anyway — health, social affairs, urban policy and recreation, these are some of the areas of government responsibility that should be under exclusive provincial jurisdiction. Which is... would be a complete change in Canadian federalism. (11:30 a.m.)

I admit that in the pages that follow, you lessen the scope of "exclusive provincial jurisdiction" quite a bit since, when you speak of immigration, you say that even so, both governments must share responsibility. This is not terribly clear. I have a little trouble understanding the meaning of the word "exclusive". But no matter, how do you see this taking place, such a distribution of powers to each province... because of course it would not be just for Québec... each Canadian province would have such powers. What are the chances, in your opinion, that the rest of Canada would accept such a redistribution of powers between the federal and provincial governments? What kind of intervention do you think this will require? Because really, Meech was rejected for a lot less than that. We're talking about a major change here. And you think there's a chance that English Canada would accept something like this?

**Mr. Leduc:** Mr. Parizeau, I have to tell you that this morning we made a minor correction to that page, the only correction we made. Like you, when we reread the document yesterday and the day before, we noticed an inaccuracy which had to be corrected. Therefore, what we said in the text on page 24, what we say in the corrected version is that the list of powers which you just mentioned are examples of powers which some people might claim as almost exclusively provincial jurisdiction.

Except for a few, specifically immigration and manpower, they are examples of powers that we could easily see as being almost exclusively provincial powers. And then, also on page 24, in the text you have, we said that we are not in a

position to recommend a definitive solution. That is in your text and should perhaps have been the first sentence in the paragraph instead of the last. I apologize for this misunderstanding.

But, we are not experts on the Constitution, we did not attempt to conclude that all these powers should be under exclusive provincial jurisdiction. On the question of immigration, we said that Québec should have exclusive control over its immigration, but we also said that it would be within the federal system. This would necessarily entail certain interprovincial agreements, for example in matters of health and national security. Then, on page 24, we spoke of the principle as well as exceptions. As for training, to quote the other example, in our brief, we say that the province must be able to manage its manpower plan for the year 2000. We are inclined to think that the province should play a major role in the area of manpower, but not having studied the issue in depth, we hesitate to say that it should be done without exception.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Léonard. Are you ready?

**Mr. Léonard:** I see, Mr. Leduc, that the list of powers you mention is quite extensive, and the question that comes to my mind is: How would it be possible to negotiate such a list so soon after the failure of Meech Lake? At the same time, from an economic perspective, considering the size of the national debt, the trend in the coming years will necessarily be to increase centralization within Canada. But, if we remain within the Canadian federation, we would be bucking this trend. Even so, it has been at least 30 years since we began talking about a redistribution of powers, and I don't see any new elements that would allow us to bring pressure to bear against the federal government so that they carry out this redistribution now, and the costs of long negotiations, you stated this quite clearly in your brief, are extremely high and I think that we would be talking about a long round of discussions. When we begin examining fundamental issues such as these, it seems to me that the path followed by Eastern Europe is the one to consider... in taking the bull by the horns, decisions are being made and implemented in less than a year. Take Germany for example.

**Mr. Leduc:** Mr. Léonard, when we talked about negotiations, we did not mean to imply that they would be easy. Of course there are problems with the current federation... we all recognize this. But what we are saying is that it would be far easier to negotiate from a partnership basis, a basis that does not leave the question of federation in the air, rather than to adopt Québec independence pure and simple, even

with an economic association. At least, it is our opinion that it would be an easier place to start from.

**Mr. Powell (David):** If you will allow me... we mustn't forget that the Meech Lake Accord was approved by eight governments representing more than 90 % of the Canadian population. When we speak of negotiation, and I don't want to enter into a legal debate, but it is clear that, with the exception of the amending formula for the Canadian constitution, which requires unanimity of the governments within Canada, there were areas of the Meech Lake Accord that could have been adopted using the existing amending formula, I mean the approval of seven provinces representing at least 50 % of the population. It was a case of an agreement that was made but which was, for technical reasons, not adopted and which is, as a result, not law in Canada today, but it could be the law in Canada today. I would also like to add, as we said in our opening remarks, we are not the only ones in Canada to feel that there are flaws in the federation, the structure, the powers. We know, in the area of immigration for example, that Ontario and British Columbia are seeking additional powers so that they have more control over the regional economy. The same is true all across Canada. When provinces seek more control over their regional economy, they are going to look for more powers and will have friends and allies elsewhere.

**Mr. Léonard:** You don't think that, in the negotiation process, whether you're talking unanimity or the 7-50 clause, Québec would ultimately be treated like all the other provinces? That when Québec asks for a power, the others won't ask for it too? You say that several provinces had approved the Meech Lake Accord, but even surveys dealing with this issue, even the surveys showed that Canadians did not necessarily agree with the first ministers who had already signed it. This left them very reticent, or in any case cautious about recognizing it, which led to the problems we experienced. And, therefore, I see us returning to the process found in the Constitution of 1982. This process is unavoidable and ultimately led to the rejection of our minimum conditions. We must face facts.

**Mr. Powell:** Yes, we have to face facts, and the fact is that with the exception of the amending formula and the right of veto, all other elements of the Meech Lake Accord could have been adopted under the Constitution in its present form. I would also like to say that, yes, public opinion played an important role. I agree completely, but look, you have a Canadian political class with an obligation to base its leadership on public opinion and, at the same

time, surveys show a majority of Canadians are in favour of the death penalty. But we don't have a death penalty in Canada. Why not? Because politicians are responsible for determining what is best for society and for basing their decisions on that, not allowing themselves to be dragged to the left or right by public opinion, which changes from day to day.

**Mr. Léonard:** I get the impression, from what you are saying, that you would begin discussions all over again with one and ultimately all ten.

**Mr. Powell:** No.

**Mr. Léonard:** But that is what you are saying, at least what you are proposing, to some degree, a change to the constitutional amending formula. And I can't see that happening any time soon.

**Mr. Powell:** We'll have to disagree.

**Mr. Djandji (Guy):** I would like to add something to this discussion. As you know, basically, Québec has already repatriated certain powers, and other provinces have accepted this. First off, we must always try to improve a system, and we must not forget that each of you, the representatives of the people, serve the people. Therefore, looking at this pragmatically, you must prove, first to everyone else, the people, and then to the federal government, that what we are asking for would allow us to manage our own affairs more effectively, and would provide economies of scale that would engender a drop, isn't that right, in the national debt, would improve business management, and would make the system more democratic, which means more effective decision-making. Then, any decision in favour of access to a federal service or against it, is strictly a matter of negotiation and agreement.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Liberator, this concludes the time allotted for this group of questions. We will now move on to questions from the government bloc and Mr. Russell... Oh no! Pardon me, we are moving on to another bloc and will return to you... We are now going to have questions from general members and Mr. Roger Nicolet is the first on our list.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I would like to lead into my question with a reference to your brief and to Appendices A and B. What strikes me in these Appendices is the variety, the plurality of the origins of the members of your group. What I find particularly interesting, considering the content and scope which you indicated — regardless of exactly how

you interpret page 24 - is how clearly you were able to capture some of the problems currently facing Québec society. And, to paraphrase Michel Rocard who said that you cannot build a country by ignoring its minorities, I chose to read into your brief an opportunity to begin a dialogue by mentioning the different groups who, too often, feel themselves removed from or strangers to the process justifying the existence of this commission.

Within this context, I have avidly followed your exchanges with the Opposition on mechanisms for renegotiating the Canadian confederative agreement. It seems to me... and I will come back to this with two specific questions, the first being a follow-up to what the Official Opposition said... don't you believe that any strategic planning... any government planning to negotiate must have a solid negotiating position which allows it to remove any structural objections that it perceives its spokespersons may feel.

(11:45 a.m.)

The second is addressed more specifically to the problem of relations between English-speaking and French-speaking groups. We have often talked about individual and collective rights when speaking of language issues. I believe, considering the current uneasiness that exists between the two communities, this is the difference at the root of any misunderstandings or distrust. Do you have any thoughts on this matter?

**Mr. Leduc:** Certainly, Mr. Nicolet. To answer your first question, of course, we must have a starting point for negotiation. We think that a position which accepts federalism but still calls for changes is probably the best, the most sensible and the most likely to yield results in the short-term. One of the things that everyone agrees on, Mr. Nicolet, is that we don't have much time. In fact, Canada is the only industrialized, democratic country currently reviewing the very foundations of its Constitution.

While we've been doing this, other countries have been thinking about competition and preparing for the coming century. Therefore, we believe we have a better chance and will receive a fairer hearing in other parts of the country if we present our claims in a spirit of partnership in which we attempt, being very open and having the same expectations for the other partners, to reach a solution which strengthens the federation from an economic standpoint while giving Québec as much leeway as possible with regard to the maintenance, development and promotion of its identity. In our opinion... we believe this is the best way to proceed. We're not saying that it will be easy, or even that it will be very fast, but we do feel that it is the fastest way.

Secondly, you'll see in a couple of places in our brief, the Board of Trade has, for several years, served both English-speaking and French-speaking clients. We believe that it should be public policy - announced publicly - that in Québec, French is the first language. This must be made very clear. And we accept the fact that immigration laws should do all they could to integrate immigrants into the Francophone majority.

But, and this must be said, we cannot forget the English language, we'll call it the "second language", and we cannot say that a choice must be made. We must, as a matter of course, promote both. Otherwise, we would be in a somewhat ridiculous position, Mr. Nicolet. It would be like having a school where it's a choice between geography and history; choose one or the other, not both. Such a debate would be out of the question.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Briefly, Mr. Chairman. To follow-up your first answer, if I look through your brief, you talk about a 10-year period. Other groups that have come before us, other business groups to date, have all spoken of a much shorter deadline. Do you really believe a 10-year plan is satisfactory?

**Mr. Leduc:** Did we say 10 years... O.K. Go ahead.

**Mr. Powell:** Ten years is in the context of starting again, almost from scratch, I mean, and Mr. Leduc said this earlier, that we would favour a rearrangement of the Canadian federation simply because we believe it is the quickest way to reach the desired conclusion.

That would mean at least two, if not more, sides to negotiate. As you say in English, "it takes two to tango". And that would mean another party. It's all well and good for us to take up a negotiating position, but it takes another party as well. We think that, assuming we want to reach a solution as quickly as possible - in our brief, we make mention of the government debt - each year we delay constitutional solutions, we delay financial solutions to the situation which is becoming more and more difficult, until, now, the government debt is \$17 000 for each man, woman and child in Canada. This problem is sending out a message to other countries - Canada and Canadians are not taking their debts seriously, and lending rates will increase as a result, because we are becoming a greater and greater risk.

This means that time is of the essence and for us, the option of negotiating within...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I'm afraid the time for questions is over Mr. Nicolet. I believe you have basically completed your answer, Mr. Powell?

**Mr. Powell:** Yes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you. We will now move on to Mr. d'Anjou, who will be followed by Mr. Libman and Mr. Laberge.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Leduc, I would like to congratulate your group on being so open-minded with regard to a French Québec. I think attitudes like yours will certainly help establish better relations between the various communities in Québec.

You spoke of the imminent disaster resulting from Canada's financial situation because of the accumulated deficit which is almost \$400 billion. You claim exclusive jurisdiction for Québec over a number of powers which are currently subject to overlapping jurisdiction, but you take no clear position on two points which strike me as very important and which have led, quite clearly, to our financial difficulties: federal spending powers and the residual powers of the federal government. Obviously, this philosophy is completely different than the one espoused in past decades. But how do you feel about federal government spending powers, which are doubtless responsible for our poor financial situation and which have allowed the federal government to make incursions into what were areas of provincial jurisdiction, and also residual powers? What do think of all this?

**Mr. Leduc:** O.K., as we said earlier, Mr. d'Anjou, we have not even attempted to look at the issue of power sharing. All right, spending powers and residual powers are fairly extensive. We would say, however, that, as much as possible, dual jurisdictions should be eliminated, and this would include overlapping jurisdictions. I must add, though, that if we are drawn into a discussion of these powers, whether we are talking about spending powers or residual powers, we must always first consider strengthening the federation's economic position. If you read our brief, right at the beginning, we established a certain limited number of guidelines, there are four: monetary union, the national fiscal structure, income balancing, etc. retaining a strong Canadian voice internationally, and harmonizing tax regulations and laws. In brief, the means to bolster the federation's economy, without impeding a full and complete discussion of sharing. We have no particular opinion as to whether or not spending powers and residual powers should be eliminated.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. d'Anjou, are you through?

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Yes, that's it. Thank you, Mr.

Chairman.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Excuse me, Mr...

**Mr. Liberatore (Luigi):** Yes. I would like to add that the problems we're having here today are really the result of bad management on the part of those administering public funds. In order to find solutions to our problems, we must first analyse the problem, by recognizing it and then by applying pragmatic solutions. All governments have to be aware that when they manage what are public funds, they must do so using the accepted management framework. This has not been the case, and a practical solution would be to provide each level of government with controlled and controllable tolerance levels to prevent errors of this magnitude.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Liberatore. Now, we will move on to Mr. Libman, who will be followed by Mr. Laberge.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also find this brief very realistic. I agree with Mr. d'Anjou and Mr. Nicolet. They show a good grasp of Québec society and economic realities which are very hard to deny, even my colleagues to the right have trouble disagreeing with some of these premises. As you said, 95 % of the Canadian population supported the Meech Lake Accord. We must also stress that there was consensus, it was merely the formula that didn't work. It was evident that it was not necessarily the degree of decentralization or provincial-Canadian jurisdiction that was responsible for the failure of Meech, it was really the clarification of the distinct society clause. That was the thing, in the end, which killed the Meech Lake Accord.

But, just before moving on to another question, I would like to add that another reason I find your brief so realistic and so significant is that you do not use the kind of scare tactics that usually get some reaction from the media. My first question concerns something mentioned on page 11, which reads: "Ce problème concerne toute la population puisqu'il continue de détourner toute notre attention, nos énergies et nos ressources des questions économiques urgentes dont nous devrions aussi nous occuper. Mais il est évident qu'aussi longtemps que le débat constitutionnel restera sans issue, nous ne pourrions, en tant que pays, nous consacrer à ces autres questions." Ma question est donc la suivante: Il est souhaitable, de toute évidence, de renouveler le système fédéral, selon moi, pour pallier certaines de ses lacunes. En fait, toutes les personnes qui prennent part à la présente

discussion estiment que le statu quo n'est probablement plus acceptable pour le Québec et pour le reste du Canada. Mais croyez-vous qu'il soit urgent d'apporter des changements importants à la constitution? Estimez-vous que ces changements sont indispensables? Ne pensez-vous pas qu'ils peuvent en réalité mettre en jeu certains des avantages économiques qu'offre la confédération canadienne, et que vous mentionnez à la page 18: "Nous jouissons toujours de l'un des niveaux de vie les plus élevés du monde, qui est dû en grande partie aux caractéristiques fondamentales de la confédération." Vous savez, je ne me rappelle pas qu'il ait été question dans votre mémoire des dix années, mais que diriez-vous si le pays cessait pour un certain temps de discuter de la question constitutionnelle pour s'attaquer aux problèmes économiques actuels?

**Mr. Leduc:** Mr. Libman, as you know, there are many issues related to the Constitution and the aborted constitutional negotiations of last June and we have already mentioned a few, the national debt for one, even if it is not a purely constitutional issue... all these major problems must receive some of our attention. And then there's the constitutional split which has persisted since June, we can't live with this and at the same time deal with all the economic problems facing us. So we hope that everything will return to normal as long as everyone is motivated, and we believe that now, I think, more and more, people are realizing that we have to act far more quickly than we have been, I don't have any examples, but you know them already. We are confident that by motivating ourselves to achieve certain economic objectives like those mentioned in our brief, and by being good partners like we described, without letting our interests fall by the wayside, we should be able to get the ball rolling.  
(12:00 p.m.)

**Mr. Libman:** I have a question, Mr. Chairman. We keep talking about Québec being recognized as one of the ten. Have you considered, or do you recognize, the concept of Québec as one of the four regions of Canada, for example the Western provinces, the Maritime provinces, Ontario and Québec?

**Mr. Leduc:** I have no problem recognizing that reality, Mr. Libman. But I must say that we haven't dwelled on the issue.

**Mr. Libman:** One last question. I refer to page 16 again. You mention, il est mentionné: "Comment réglerait-on les différends entourant les frontières provinciales, la dette et les arrangements monétaires?" Croyez-vous qu'il soit possible de les régler? Certaines collectivités ou certains groupes du Québec essaieront de conserver leur territoire s'ils ne sont pas d'accord avec l'accession du Québec à la souveraineté; con-

sidérez-vous que cela peut poser un problème? Les conflits au sujet de certains territoires... Ne voyez-vous pas cette attitude émerger de certains groupes qui ne sont peut-être pas en faveur de l'indépendance du Québec, qui souhaitent conserver des liens étroits avec le Canada?

**Mr. Leduc:** I am not a constitutional expert, Mr. Libman. But of course, that type of discussion might arise. We'd like to avoid it because it always becomes so emotional. Beyond that... well, I hope that answers your question.

**Mr. Libman:** But you mention in...

**Mr. Liberatore:** Mr. Libman, to answer your question, I believe that that would be a relatively minor matter. As soon as you decide Canada's going to stay and the regions are going to be rearranged, the debate about, "What are the boundaries of such and such a region?" becomes much less important and, shall we say, secondary to the agreement.

**Mr. Libman:** I am not so sure of that, but I brought it up because, in your own brief, you mention disputes which might arise over boundaries, etc.

**Mr. Leduc:** Of course, in principle, if you dismantle, and this is the term we use, if you dismantle a country, this type of question could arise. But we are merely speculating when we bring it up.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Libman. We will continue with Mr. Laberge, followed by Mr. Beaudry.

**Mr. Laberge:** Mr. Chairman, first of all I would like to congratulate the Bureau de commerce. You have made remarkable progress over the past years! I feel I have to say it. It wasn't too long ago that I went to the "Bureau du Board of Trade". So much has changed, over the past few years you have become known as the "Bureau de commerce de Montréal", and I think that you have done an even better job of representing Montréal and region, as it should be represented throughout the world and across Canada.

There are some people who get a bit defensive. Our friend André Quétel, Mr. Libman. Personally, I have never thought of Canada as a banana republic. I maintain what I have always said; if I had to choose between Canada and the United States tomorrow, I would choose Canada. I have no hesitation in saying so. Of course we have accomplished things even as a part of Canada, except that - and you are in agreement

with this as well — there are things that Québec needs in order to, for example, formulate better manpower policies, to get things done. There are, of course, things that we agree on. Twenty-eight organizations at the labour forum, for example, were in agreement about repatriating a whole bunch of powers. You say a number of things in your brief with which I totally agree: the climate needed in Québec, new agreements, new arrangements with the federal government or any other agreement. You talk about a climate which favours investment and access to adequate capital. You will see that we have done everything possible to raise a bit more capital for financing within that climate. Access to qualified manpower, we have. Larger markets, of course. New technology, a competitive tax system... I was pleased to note that the Québec division of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association recognized for the first time that Québec offers competitive tax breaks for businesses. This is a first; I was ecstatic, during our next round of negotiations, it will help us to continue improving the quality of life which will in turn help us attract and keep personnel. You can continue to count on us to help you achieve this.

You have proposed four hypotheses: redefinition or adaptation of the present Canadian federation, Québec sovereignty with a new supranational structure, Québec sovereignty with close economic association, Québec independence with weak economic association. Weak, that's the opposite of close, I assume. No, no, you didn't want to say brave and weak... No? O.K. I think that at this point almost everyone has rejected the first option and the fourth. I think someone said: Status quo, impossible, and most people said: "pure, hardline" independence — that was the expression the Chairman used — I'm like Mr. Hogue, I approach the microphone, turn away and talk off to the side...

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

**Mr. LaBerge:** Can you hear me? Okay, that leaves us with two options. You are telling us that the Montréal Board of Trade firmly believes that Québec's future as a distinct society and prosperous economy is best assured as part of a reorganized Canadian federal system. After congratulating you on what you have become, for your role in everything that has occurred in Québec — and you play an important role — I have only one question. How do you think we can accomplish it, negotiate with someone who has just said they will not negotiate even the bare minimum? You have to recognize that the demands made by the gouvernement du Québec at Meech Lake were already considered unsatisfactory by a number of Quebecers. And, unfortunately it was not just the fact that one or two premiers changed their mind that killed the Accord. If it were only that! You must be aware

that there were surveys which showed that a vast majority of Canadians were against the Meech Lake Accord. I no longer remember the exact figures, but over 60 % of Canadians rejected the Meech Lake Accord. We went into that with a bare, bare minimum, and their answer was "no". How can you reconcile that with what you have said to us here today, what you believe? I would be fascinated by your answer.

**Mr. Liberatore:** Mr. LaBerge, I would like to answer your question. First, I want to congratulate you on your open-minded approach to negotiation. First of all, as usual, you are very forthright in what you say, your words are not veiled in hidden meaning. Secondly, I would like to congratulate you on becoming a shareholder in one of my companies.

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

**Mr. Liberatore:** So, I believe that the way, the most fundamental way for us to assume our responsibilities to one another is to build a better country, to realize that production must increase, that each one of us must assume his responsibilities and move to the forefront. These are exceptional things, and I have to say that, more and more, you are taking the initiative and shouldering these responsibilities. You are not asking for something for nothing. O.K. then, I would like to return, really, to the issue of the negotiations of the country. In my opinion, as a country, the point on which we stumbled, is in trying to unite a country by political means. We are aware that politics, unfortunately, often lead to futile debate. What we must really do, is try to unite the country economically and create a political system within the economic union with which we can all live. That's where the equation must change. It is absolutely essential that we be a country that is stronger economically. As soon as we achieve this, we can apply political solutions. As long as the political debate continues and prevents us from focussing on changing business conditions, we will lose parts of the market, we will be less and less productive and we will be unable to cope with free trade and future business needs.

**Mr. LaBerge:** Mr. Chairman, I...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You have some time remaining, Mr. LaBerge.

**Mr. LaBerge:** Just a very short question, very quickly: Have we become your partners or have you become ours?

**Mr. Liberatore:** O.K...

**Mr. LaBerge:** The other question is... I think

that you must realize... Canada has really had some ups and downs, of course. Some periods have been worse than others and some not so less bad. But we must recognize - I think everyone recognizes this - that for the last few years, Canada's fiscal and monetary policies have been directed toward helping and trying to control Ontario's slightly overheated economy, to the detriment of Québec and the other provinces. I think this is something we really have to recognize. And again, when you say that we need to be stronger, well I want to be stronger. I think it is up to us, as Quebecers, to say what Québec needs in order to become the society we've talked about for so long and which we are just now I think beginning to get a slightly better handle on. I think that we have to make up our minds first, and then, after that, we'll see.

**Mr. Liberator:** Yes, but I believe, Mr. Laberge... We've been associates for at least 30 years, because your unions have been in our factories for 30 years. In terms of financial association, we negotiated for months to acquire a company in which you are shareholders, and there were problems. But today you are shareholders, and partners, and the company is prospering. It is always the same thing. You have to know what you're doing. You have to stop talking, figure out what needs to be done, and do it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Your time is up Mr. Laberge. We will now move on to Mr. Beaudry, who will be followed by Mr. Campeau.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In your brief, Mr. Leduc, you state on page 19, with regard to monetary policy that: "Monetary policy could become one of the most significant and controversial issues, and potentially the most damaging to the economy and banking system." You add, in the next paragraph, "Break-up of the current monetary union, planned or flowing naturally from the adoption of a federal structure so weak that the central authority no longer had sovereign power to maintain common currency, would seriously undermine the Canadian economy over both the short and long term."

Several briefs calling for sovereignty have been presented to this Commission. The briefs, no matter what option was chosen, all favoured having a currency in common with the rest of Canada.

My question is the following. It is certain that, within such a context, Québec representatives would work alongside Canadian representatives to determine the monetary policies of the Bank of Canada. Do you believe that such a formula could be used in the type of renewed federalism you are calling for?

**Mr. Leduc:** We believe so. But I must tell you that we have not looked into ways of improving the Canadian banking system, for example, the Bank of Canada. I think that everyone is aware of the need to improve it. Mr. Laberge commented earlier that there is certainly a feeling that the Bank does not base its activities on the well-being of all regions of Canada. But, at the structural level, certainly at the level of these objectives, we are anticipating that it will function much better. But to answer your question: Do we know a well-kept secret to markedly improving things? We would have to think about it.

**Mr. Beaudry:** But do you think, Mr. Leduc, that Québec would be able to assert itself and that the other provinces, for example, would accept Québec's right to do so and, say I were one of the people making the decisions at the Bank of Canada, my right to determine future monetary policy.

**Mr. Leduc:** I have the impression that if we proceed, as I believe we must, with a partnership which includes rights and obligations, that probably the other provinces would like to have a voice on this matter. In any case, I imagine it would be so.

**Mr. Beaudry:** That's fine, thank you.  
(12:15 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Beaudry. Mr. Campeau?

**Mr. Campeau:** Mr. Leduc, if I might return to Mr. Laberge's question. First off, I feel your appearance before the Commission comes just in time to help us regain our balance. Up until now, the scales were really tipping the other way, and you have helped to even things out a little. You represent an important group in Québec. I will return to the strategy that Mr. Laberge spoke of earlier. We know that the demands of Meech Lake were not the end of the world. My friend, Mr. Laberge, said that there was nothing there and it was still not approved. Mr. Laberge echoed Mr. Bourassa in saying: If the premiers of Canada had felt the public was supporting them, Meech would have passed. Conclusion, it is, in a certain sense, the general populace which rejected it. If so, when Québec wants to get a little more, from a strategic standpoint, how will it be able to do so? What strategy will it have to adopt to obtain the little it wants, and will it be possible?

**Mr. Leduc:** If we had a simple answer to your question, Mr. Chairman, I don't think there would be any need for this Commission. The question is tricky. I think that if we get involved in another debate as a partner, as an associate in a partnership, and, obviously, if we



expect interesting, and I would even go so far as to say spectacular, conclusions from you, we assume you will find the path that is the most likely to lead us to a safe port as quickly as possible. What you are asking us is, in fact, a question of political strategy dealing as much with the scope of your final report, the decisions that the government will take, as with how merchandise is sold across the country. But we have the impression that things are still changing and that, more and more, in terms of new ideas, Québec is seen by the rest of the country as thinking about things much more deeply and that sometimes others wait, ambivalent and confused, for Québec to make interesting and valuable contributions, and even count on that.

**Mr. Campeau:** Is there still time? Do you think that the power relationship between Québec and the rest is important? In other words, we agree that perhaps Québec has economic advantages as a part of Canada, but Canada gains many advantages from Québec. Are our people going to be able to sell these advantages? In other words - I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings - we are surrounded by politicians, no offence to them either, but do you think that if Meech Lake had been negotiated by businessmen it would have succeeded?

**Mr. Leduc:** No, I wouldn't like to say that because as we said earlier, in our opening statement, Mr. Chairman, we also tried to exert certain outside pressure and we saw very clearly that the climate was far from ideal. Therefore, I believe...

**Mr. Campeau:** Was it better in 1982?

**Mr. Liberatore:** Mr. Chairman, if you don't mind, I'll answer that question very directly. I am a businessman, I must constantly adapt to change, to changing viewpoints, I have to motivate people, to really lesson to them, I have to finish projects and sell them constantly. The answer, if it had been negotiated by businessmen, "yes".

**Mr. Campeau:** Thank you.

**Mr. Liberatore:** If I may, I would like to add something to that, we have already said that, in the case of the Meech Lake Accord, with the exception of the change to the constitutional amending formula, all the other aspects of Meech Lake could have been passed using the current amending formula, and could be part of Canada's law today. Secondly, in terms of strategy, if Québec insists on a strategy that pits it against the other ten provinces, the strategy threatens to lead us to an impasse,

because it seems to me that we must find allies elsewhere in Canada - because they do exist - and these allies would respect Québec's position. There are people, not only active politicians, but politicians like Robert Stanfield, like Peter Lougheed who publicly defended the Meech Lake Accord. There are many highly influential people who respect Québec and who are ready to fight for Québec in the future. We have allies outside Québec, and we must seek them out, not simply wait for them to come to us.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Campeau... the Chair's time has elapsed, Mr. Campeau. We will now return to the members, and to Mr. Béland who will be followed by Mr. Poissant. We have seven minutes left. Mr. Béland.

**Mr. Béland:** Yes, thank you. I really liked the chapter on monetary policy, because you basically say that the interests of every region of Canada, the interests are such that we will have to wind up with a monetary union. There are people here who have come to tell us, over the past few days, that even if we agree to sovereignty, we would have to have a monetary union. In that sense, what you have shown very well is that it is so much in the interests of the rest of Canada that, even in a state of sovereignty, monetary union with the rest of Canada is plausible. Would you agree with this?

**Mr. Liberatore:** I would like to say yes, Mr. Béland, and I have to tell you that you are probably the living example of what an economy is made of. It is made up of small workers who save money, who give it to you and who trust you. That's basically what Québec is, what Canada is. It's all the little people working every day, ready to do what they can to help benefit the country as a whole.

**Mr. Béland:** But I want to be sure you have understood me. If the majority of these little people decide to claim sovereignty, do you feel that the rest of Canada would have so much to lose, that monetary union with the rest of Canada would be negotiable? You're the businessman, you know the rules of negotiation. Is it not true that, ultimately, the interests of the rest of Canada will be threatened to such a point that monetary union with a sovereign Québec state will be easy to negotiate?

**Mr. Liberatore:** I believe that that would be your responsibility... to ensure that all the little people are well protected and to take no risk which might threaten to undermine 10, 15, 20 and 30 years of their efforts and work.

**A voice:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Poissant, three minutes.

**Mr. Poissant:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to say that Mr. Campeau has already asked a good number of my questions.

I think that basically all the briefs we have received agree that negotiation will be necessary. I believe these negotiations will take place on two levels: with our current partners, and internationally. That is where, in my opinion, the question of time will come into play. You have said perhaps up to 10 years and that's where I have a problem. How are we going to reach that point when I take for granted that the fervent separatists, the Parti québécois will be shouting, "We'll never agree!" in big, bold letters, so that we never forget.

This doesn't make our job any easier, because we are definitely going to have to negotiate certain repatriations. How do you feel we will be able to do this? Perhaps you could help us settle this.

**Mr. Leduc:** Okay, I think perhaps we are coming back to this question in a different form, Mr. Poissant. We are going to have to do it with a solid plan, and, we have to say that it is more likely to remain solid if it introduces changes, perhaps major changes, to the federation from an economic standpoint, which is perhaps unprecedented since no one has really considered such a thing for many years. And for once, it's really important because, as you know, we are being watched by foreign powers. Are they going to continue to lend us money at an interest rate 4 % to 5 % higher than they offer to the United States? Yes, they will, and it could get even worse if they see that we're not able to come up with an economic plan and stick to it. This would be our number one priority, and something new. Why not try, not only is necessity the mother of invention, but I think — we think — that in the rest of Canada as well, there is a feeling that we must head in that direction.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Poissant. We have two minutes left. Mr. Bouchard. Earlier, we didn't have three minutes, we had five. I'm afraid I don't read numbers very well, I'm sorry.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Mr. Chairman, very briefly. Since 1982, we have gone through dozens of attempts to redraft the Constitution: federal-provincial conferences, businesspeople have even taken part in these conferences because some have become politicians; but it's funny, once they become politicians, they act like politicians. It's only natural, it's politics, it's the nature of the beast. In 1982, repatriation was shoved down Québec's throat despite the almost unanimous

vote of Québec's National Assembly. In 1990, Québec's minimum conditions were rejected, simply for the right to return to the table. Today, you're here, and you're telling us we have to start again, try again. How many times do we have to try? Is this the last time, or will there be more? How many times do we have to try?

**Mr. Leduc:** We're in a period, we'll always be in a period of renegotiation, Mr. Bouchard, and I hope they won't be periods of profound renegotiation. But, let's take an example. In one of last week's speeches, the Chairman of the Economic Council of Canada pointed out that, in Canada, economic turnarounds are much slower than in other countries. As for economic recovery, it took some provinces six or seven years to make up lost ground after the recession of 1982, and that's unacceptable. This affects the rest of the political context. It's as if the fact that we're currently experiencing an economic slowdown affects the Constitution as much as anything else, which means that we have to move more quickly. So what we're saying is: Let's try, maybe by placing new emphasis on the economy — and everyone knows there are pressing issues — maybe it will have an effect, at least we hope it will, on the political context, and lead us in a new direction that, we hope, will be permanent.

**Mr. Bouchard:** If I understand correctly, and then I'm through, your refusal of sovereignty is such that you will never accept it, even if the two sides could never agree?

**Mr. Leduc:** No, that's not what we're saying, and sovereignty is an option we hope never to see implemented, but for the moment, we're seeing things as they are. What is our current situation? What must we do today and in the coming weeks? After that, we'll see.

**Mr. Bouchard:** How many more failures will it take before we can consider sovereignty?

**A voice:** I'll answer part of that question.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We're out of time. Please be brief.

**Mr. Powell:** Thank you. Québec, today, is talking about cultural industries. For the past 100 years, Canada has been talking about constitutional industries. It seems obvious to me that in a federation, negotiations are almost never-ending. The beauty of a federation is that it should be flexible, able to respond to change, adapt to global changes and meet individual demands.

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

you, Mr. Powell. The government members may now ask their questions. Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, I very much appreciated your brief, which I read very carefully. It was well written and fair. Mr. Laberge said earlier that you have made a great many changes and, indeed, in looking at your proposal, you've come a long way. What you're proposing is significant. You're proposing substantial changes to Canadian federalism. (12:30 p.m.)

You say at the outset that Québec boasts one of the highest standards of living in the world and you are completely right. You're certainly not wrong when you associate it with the federal system. And you are proposing fairly major changes. On page 22 of your brief, you talk about "Education, culture, communications, immigration, labour, manpower, unemployment insurance, regional economic development, financial services (including banks, probably) and institutions, health, social affairs, urban policy and recreation...". And then you tell me that this isn't even restrictive, that it could include other powers. That's somewhat along the same line of thought as the chambers of commerce which opened our hearings in Québec City with the brilliant presentation by Maître Lambert. Upon rereading these two briefs - which are well written, solid briefs - we arrive at a new and improved Canadian federal system, totally new and improved. I'm wondering if even our artists who presented their brief earlier wouldn't, in the end, agree with these two briefs.

And again on page 22, you state: "There is little doubt that any new Canadian economic union, however reorganized, will almost inevitably require some sharing of decision-making powers." My question is this: Is what you are proposing this morning not, in fact, a new economic union with Canada?

**Mr. Leduc:** I'll have to apologize a second time, Mr. Rémillard. Earlier, in answer to a question by Mr. Parizeau, I said that we made a change to page 22 this morning. We rewrote the paragraph, or at least the sentence listing the jurisdictions. We introduce it as a list of government responsibilities frequently mentioned as being under exclusively provincial jurisdiction. Our position is not to propose exclusiveness of this kind. In fact - and I admit the paragraph wasn't very clear to begin with - the last sentence in the paragraph reads: "... we are not in a position to recommend any final solutions." We're providing examples.

However, and I thank you for having pointed it out, we also say in our brief that Québec should be able to manage its manpower plan for the year 2000 as exclusively as possible. We also say that Québec should be able to

control and manage its immigration almost exclusively. And we mention - you're aware of the difficulties - that when there is a movement of labour from one province to another, obviously the provinces in question can negotiate their rights. We give examples of sectors that could, and with which we are not at all uncomfortable, be exclusively under provincial jurisdiction. We say that we do not like dual jurisdiction in many sectors of activity and that we should be looking at efficiency. On page 23, we even suggest possible criteria for determining how powers should be distributed between the federal and provincial governments. So, having said that we're not constitutionalists, we nevertheless provide certain tests or examples of areas which we would have no problem seeing under exclusively Québec jurisdiction. But I regret having given the impression that we had decided, in absolute terms, that these areas be exclusively provincial jurisdiction.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Yes, you tabled a revised page before the Commission this morning - we haven't had time to give everyone a copy - which clearly states: These are an example of government responsibilities that, according to some, should be exclusively..., etc. as you said earlier. The fact that this revision got to us a little late, it is certainly welcome, but it perhaps created some confusion on all parts...

**Mr. Rémillard:** All right. I understand.

**A voice:** Excuse me...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Please, the issue's closed. The new page has officially been inserted in the file.

**Mr. Rémillard:** All right. I understand, Mr. Leduc. You consult others, and I'm pleased you said that because, the bottom line is that, between your brief and the Parti québécois' book published in 1985 on the "beau risque", there was a lot of similarities with what you were asking for then. If we associate this with the brief presented by the chambers of commerce, we can see that, as I mentioned earlier, yes we have federalism, but deeply modified as such, and you still qualify it, again on page 24, since I don't believe you changed it in the note you sent to the chair, as a "new Canadian economic union". So, my question is this: When you get right down to it, is what you're proposing this morning really not just that, a new Canadian economic union?

**Mr. Leduc:** No, I think perhaps the word "union" was not the right choice, but several times in our brief we say that what we're proposing is new and improved federalism,

possibly totally new and improved, but that one of the bases, one of the foundations on which this federalism must be built is a strengthened economy. In our opinion, this would be an innovation.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Liberatore, you told us earlier that if the businesspeople had negotiated Meech, perhaps it would have been passed. Note that I'm taking careful note of your remark.

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

**Mr. Rémillard:** Careful note.

**Mr. Leduc:** But we're offering you our collaboration in our brief, Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Yes, and you also offered it in the case of Meech, and I know that you went to see Mr. Wells on several occasions, and Mr. Filmon. Now, it's not just two provinces that led to the failure of Meech. In reality, it was a majority of Canadians - and I think we all agree on that. Mr. Wells is no national hero with only 8 % of the population, it's a little more of a majority than that in his case. But that's another matter, we're discussing something altogether different now. But the fact remains, and I keep coming back to the same question you've been asked over and over, what do we do? What do we do? What you're proposing, even if you quote others, and I believe your quote, referring you to others, regarding power sharing, is still something you find appealing. I'm also referring to the chambers of commerce that tabled their briefs during the first day of hearings. What you're proposing is all very interesting, but do we continue to use the same amending formula, the same process? Do we use other means? And if we use other means, what are they? What will the difference be? That's what we'd be interested in knowing.

**Mr. Liberatore:** If I may... Mr. Rémillard, you know, we businessmen, the people who are responsible for a few jobs here and there, if we want to survive we always have to act on common sense and compromise. So we understand your political frustrations when you have to deal with men like Mr. Wells who are willing to destroy Canada strictly on the principle of not agreeing with the method. A hundred times he said: "I am not in agreement with the process." He said, "I have nothing against Québec but I am not in agreement with the process." That would never have happened between two businessmen.

**Mr. Rémillard:** In that case, Mr. Liberatore - getting back to what you just said - if we gave you the mandate to go negotiate your proposal, if we gave you that mandate, and you

travelled across Canada to negotiate what you're proposing this morning, how long do you think it could take you?

**Mr. Liberatore:** I'll tell you: On the condition we negotiate with other businessmen...

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

**Mr. Liberatore:** ...in our opinion, the issue would be settled fairly quickly.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Well, I think you must be proposing much more profound change than the mandate of...

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

**Mr. Liberatore:** When you get right down to it, what we're saying...

**Mr. LaBerge:** Mr. Chairman, point of order.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Not allowed. There's not enough time left, Mr. LaBerge.

**Mr. LaBerge:** But, it's a point of order.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Yes, but the points of order say that the chairmen's decisions are final and irrevocable.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** It's stated in the points of order of the Assembly.

**Mr. LaBerge:** As far as I know, you haven't many any decisions yet...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I decided not to listen to you.

**Mr. LaBerge:** ...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You're going to flatter me. I'll end up listening to you.

**Mr. LaBerge:** But Mr. Chairman, I officially congratulated the Board of Trade on their brief. Given that they made substantial changes, should I take back part of my congratulations?

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You'll have the right to a comment but in the meantime, this was not within your allotted time. We'll go on to Mr. Russell Williams.

**Mr. Williams:** I followed Mr. Rémillard's questions somewhat. We've discussed all the

questions regarding the failure of Meech, our thoughts, our impressions, etc. But today, we're talking about the future. And you've showed open-mindedness, a willingness to negotiate, and I'd like to congratulate you on that. However, I'd like to step backwards with some of the same questions. What have you businesspeople heard in your dealings outside Québec to get the impression that this willingness to "give and take" really exists, that Québec could begin negotiating? What's changed since June 23? Where was this will on June 23?

**Mr. Powell:** I'll answer that Mr. Chairman. We're very active within the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Recently, I attended a Canadian Chamber of Commerce convention in Edmonton and I had the opportunity to talk with a hundred or so people who are in a position similar to mine, that is, people who work within their organization at the local or provincial level across the country. And I was truly astonished to see first, the degree of discontent and, second, the degree of interest in Québec and the constitutional question.

We were joking with Mr. Liberatore. However, I think that those people who should really have an interest in doing business and in the economy are often not as involved as they should be in this type of debate, in this type of situation. At the close of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's annual convention, the chairman of the board, who comes from Yellowknife, was making his closing speech merely with a view to saying we were a little disappointed in the failure of the Meech Lake Accord.

And when this man made his speech before at least 500 people, he couldn't repeat often enough: "I'm trying to say that I don't want the country to break up". After he had finished, there was applause, I tell you, it was unbelievable.

We're not taking it for granted that nothing is feasible. If we show strong will, if we really want to, I think it can be done, and there are a lot of people in this country who are on our side, if I can put it that way. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You have one minute left, Mr. Williams.

**Mr. Williams:** Just one more quick question. Did I understand correctly that you said you were in favour of a rearrangement of the Canadian federation because it makes remedying constitutional issues faster? If there's another way of remedying them faster, will you be in favour?

**Mr. Leduc:** O.K. What I mean is that how fast a change can be made and how fast a situation in need of remedy can be remedied are obviously important factors. But the bottom line

is the idea that a renewed federalism is the best answer for Québec, and for Canada as well. And it is also the option that has the best chance of breaking the impasse fast.

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** O.K. I would like to thank you all for your brief, which gave rise to some very interesting discussions. I would ask you to officially table the revised page so as to complete the file. Thank you Mr. Harper, Mr. Powell, Mr. Djandji and Mr. Liberatore, and thank you Mr. Leduc. Proceedings are now adjourned. They will resume at 2:00 this afternoon.

I would remind members of the Commission that there is a secretariat in the basement if they would like to make phone calls, use the fax, etc. I would also remind you to wear the badge we gave you to facilitate circulation and admission within the building. You can leave any documents on the table here; the room will be safe, I "assure" you, to take up the refrain. Proceedings are adjourned until 2:00 this afternoon.

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

(Proceedings resumed at 2:07 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Please take your seats ladies and gentlemen, members of the Commission. We will begin this afternoon's hearings with the Fédération des groupes ethniques du Québec. You have one hour and thirty minutes. Let me remind you that the person presenting the brief has 10 minutes to do so. The speaking times for the members of the Commission are as follows: 20 minutes for the parliamentary group representing the government, 20 minutes for the parliamentary group representing the official Opposition, 40 minutes for the other members of the Commission and 10 minutes for the Chair.

Now let us begin. Mr. Taranu, I would ask you to introduce the members of your group and then proceed with your 10-minute presentation.

#### Fédération des groupes ethniques du Québec

**Mr. Taranu (Jean):** Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, starting at my far right, we have: Ian Trzcinski, Miriane Botta, Dr. Georges Saine. My name is Jean Taranu. To my left, Jaroslaw Pryszlak and Jack W. Lee.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Fine, thank you, if you could get on with presenting your brief.

**Mr. Taranu:** In the 1960s, we presented our first brief ever to the Dunton-Laurendeau

Commission, whose conclusions on bilingualism and biculturalism, while taking into account the enriching strength of ethnic groups, were not included in the fourth volume. In 1978, our Fédération appeared before the Pepin-Roberts Commission. In 1979, we organized a two-day symposium on ethnic communities and the various constitutional options, in the Tritorium of the Cégep du Vieux-Montréal. In 1989, at a symposium and meeting, we reached a unanimous decision to publicize our support for the Meech Lake Accord among all ethnic communities. And here we are in 1990, before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, expressing our hope that this will be the last time, because we believe it is about time to make us part of the soup, if I may use that expression, before breaking the pot.

That takes care of the past. Now, let's turn to the Québec society of tomorrow. It will be, first and foremost, a just and welcoming society because, even before contemplating the kind of society we want, we have to ensure it can survive. It's all well and good to be distinct, but not at the risk of disappearing. There are only two solutions, and they are related: a dramatic upswing in the birth rate and substantially increased immigration, so that the country can at least become cost-effective. Otherwise, we will continue to have new constitutional commissions, and economic crises, every ten years.

For us, it means helping newcomers to adapt to and become integrated into the host society. Some people would like, and we hear this in all the media, for the host society to become unique and distinct, finding strength in its cultural differences, to support the concept of one nation, one culture as opposed to cultural pluralism. In 1982, Jean-Louis Roy, then the editor of the newspaper *Le Devoir*, wrote about the Charter of Rights, which talks about the protection and development of the multicultural heritage of Canadians: "Québec cannot accept a formula protecting the minorities which would create a right in this country to various categories of minorities in terms of legal recognition."

Furthermore, we are against cementing the Canadian mosaic, which would result in little ghettoized societies and the creation of an insipid, cosmopolitan society. In our opinion, the definition recently given by Mr. Bernard Landry to us appears to be the most consistent. It says that a Quebecer is someone who lives in Québec and loves it enough to consider it his homeland. But those arriving with an already complete education don't have access to this homeland. Remember, a homeland is part of your childhood. We can be here and love Québec, but as far as this "homeland" is concerned, it will touch us through our children and our grandchildren. If a homeland is childhood, then your homeland is the school. In this way, we believe that confessional school boards only increase the marginalization of immigrants, and we propose private religious

education, as it should be in a democracy.

Moreover, we recommend caution with regard to disciplinary measures that make French less attractive than English, the attractiveness of the forbidden fruit. As for us, the 1950s generation, most of us refugees, we often give the unfortunate impression of living only in our national tragedies. But them, these people... rather, we should pay tribute to them because they brought with them that very human kind of emotion which believes that life depends on remembering others. I remember others, therefore I exist, and all in the name of human dignity. Thus, for our political future, we believe that this interculturalness, this new dynamic of creating links, which still tends to remain untried, offers a promising future. Our federation's motto is: *Communio ergo sum*. You want the immigrant to exist as a function of others. To know and be known is for him like to be, or not to be. This interculturalness brings with it a sense of otherness.

That, if my memory serves me, is an expression from Gérard Pelletier in the 1960s. It was meant to suggest the emergence of cultural pluralism in Québec society. We developed this theme in the 1970s, making it the stated objective of one of our symposia in the following way: Intercultural activities should take place by means of exchanges between creative people of different cultures and not just between different ethnic groups, but also with the Francophone majority. A rich intercultural dialogue can't be sustained without social and economic motivation: the language of the workplace, hiring members of cultural communities in the public and parapublic services, press and electronic media coverage. It is very important that the news effectively reflect the ethnic and social changes in our society. We are perfectly aware that this culture is rich enough and open enough to integrate elements from various cultures and make them its own. That is the Québec culture of tomorrow. In doing this, we have introduced, in these conflicting points of view, the concept of the other or more exactly, of our relationship to the other.

Even this plurality is a reality with many different aspects. But, one thing that is specific to it, is that real exchange can only occur among values that have achieved universal acceptance, so all cultural communities and their cultures and civilizations naturally share an intercommunication project which, here in Québec, is French. This may be just a dream, because when I read *La Presse* in June 1988, I was tremendously disenchanted. I quote: "The Liberal government is unable to resolve the problem of enforcing the law and introducing French unilingualism as soon as possible, for everyone, everywhere and that, on the other hand, the Canadian federal government is pursuing goals of bilingualism and multicultural-

ism that are incompatible with francization and the promotion of our language and our culture". Still later, in *La Presse*, in September, from a series of articles on "Become French or Disappear", I quote: "French-speaking descendants of the original settlers say that immigrants' activities reveal a multicultural concept of society that runs contrary to Québec culture, to claim that the steamrollers of cultural convergence will ultimately lead, as depicted in Lise Payette's film "Disparaître", to Confucius in the place of maple syrup is not guaranteed."

To conclude, we suggest that, in the light of this information, the new Constitution enshrine: a) the reality of two linguistic communities in the country and the promotion of the multicultural heritage; b) the special case of Québec as a distinct society; c) the need to give Québec decision-making powers in the recruitment and selection of immigrations in terms of its special nature and needs. As a result, the new Constitution should see to preserving: 1. The territorial integrity of Canada; 2. Canadian citizenship; 3. National defence; 4. The Canadian currency. We firmly believe that a revision of this magnitude would make a substantial and effective contribution to maintaining Canadian unity.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, in concluding our presentation, we would like to express our regret that none of our representatives is sitting at your side. It's almost 40 years now that we have been listened to without ever being allowed to participate in the decisions that are made for us, without us, and I would have to say, in spite of us. Though we may occasionally be given shoes made of gold, if they don't fit, we can't wear them, no matter what incentives we are offered or what coercive measures are applied. We insist on the federal link because it ensures that our fundamental rights will be respected, because our base is pan-Canadian, and because, for us, there is no contradiction in being both a Quebecer and a Canadian. That being said, we agree completely that Québec is the home of the French language and culture in North America. It's a concept that we find very attractive. We ask that in this new Québec, in this new Constitution, you ban from your vocabulary such expressions as "native French-speakers, original settlers or new immigrants", "imported or exported immigrants," "neo-Quebecers", "visible and non-visible minorities" and to simply call all of us "Quebecers".

I'll close with a quotation from Jean Rostand that I heard during an interview on Radio-Canada with our late friend Fernand Séguin: "What good would it be for nature to make of each individual a different human being if society silently tries to make them all alike?" Thank you very much.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Taranu. We will begin with a block of

questions from the non-elected members. Each of them is entitled up to 10 minutes, for both questions and answers. The first person on our list is Mrs. Pagé, who will be followed by Mr. Holden. Mrs. Pagé.

**Mrs. Pagé:** First of all, I'd like to thank you for appearing before this Commission to present us with your point of view on the political and constitutional future of Québec and for thus identifying yourselves with all other Quebecers, and I use that term because for me it is quite clear that to be a Quebecer means to live in Québec, no matter how many years you may have lived here.

Based on your presentation, I have a few questions that don't relate directly to your brief or your presentation, but which will help us move a little further ahead. First of all, a comment. Like most of the groups that we've heard so far, you ask for the repatriation of powers to Québec on the immigration issue. We already have a clear consensus on that. Moreover, you know that ethnic communities... immigrants experience special problems with respect to employment, and there are many groups who are telling us that Québec must repatriate all the powers needed to introduce a full employment policy.

When you look at that, with your keener understanding of ethnic communities and of the realities immigrants face, does it seem to you that this repatriation of all powers related to employment would solve the problem that many of our fellow citizens, men and women of different origins, experience - that is, being cut off from the labour market? That is my first question.

My second question is more or less about what you were saying near the end of your presentation when you said that you wanted to preserve the federal link because that is what enables you, you said, to guarantee your fundamental rights. Well, yesterday, we heard from the Conseil du statut de la femme. They came to tell us that the two-level system of jurisdiction between the federal and provincial governments, particularly in the area of francization, was having discriminatory effects on immigrant women, who often have to wait for French-language training and, in the meantime, are cut off from the labour market and are less able to find work and achieve financial autonomy. I am sure that this situation isn't experienced only by female immigrants, but also by a lot of men. I'd like to know how you feel about this, to see if you share the opinion of the Conseil du statut de la femme, which showed that double jurisdiction works against immigrants' needs and expectations in terms of integration into the French culture and access to the labour market.

**Mr. Taranu:** Alright. The first question

involves the repatriation of powers. We expanded on this, yesterday, in a press release by saying that ethnic groups were in favour of a true Canadian confederation, of independent States, where the power sharing is negotiated directly between the State and Ottawa. We don't have to bring together all 11 provinces (sic) to demand repatriation of the rights you're referring to. On that we agree.

As far as the status of women and the problems of francization are concerned... you know, more often than not, forcing people to speak French, as is being done in schoolyards, results in ill-feeling and makes French less attractive, and, as I said in my presentation, at the other end of the scale, it makes English attractive by making it the forbidden fruit. Now, you're looking at this from another level, and I realize that francization has been an obstacle to the employment of women. On the other hand, since positive discrimination measures have been adopted, the committee, which is supposed to seek out these positive discriminations, sees not speaking French fluently or knowing another language as a positive thing, i.e. it gives one point out of five, or something, I'm not quite sure how it works now. That was the policy that was announced, I think, at the beginning of the year, in February or March.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Mr. Chairman, do I have some more time? Yes? Thank you. Still with respect to all these francization measures, I think that it's important that we understand each other. You say that most, if not all - and I'm inclined to think you said all - organizations at this table came out against coercive measures with respect to the use of French in French schools, but had pushed, instead, for a very positive approach. I think that's the one that was finally adopted, so that's taken care of. I'm positive we won't see any more demonstrations like those that took place in some French schools, where they demanded the right to speak English. O.K., having dealt with this issue, we can move on to the issue francization measures. We often hear about immigrants, both men and women, who are on waiting lists for French-language training courses. That's why the Conseil du statut de la femme told us yesterday that the double jurisdiction made it even harder for immigrants to get into French courses. Let's get this straight: If we, as a society, want everything to be in French, which is legitimate, I think that at the same time, it means we are responsible for providing the means you need to learn the language, which is not an easy one, as I'm sure we all agree. That's the point I was raising in my question.

**Mr. Taranu:** Great, first off, that's what we want too. You know, when you talk about immigration, about immigrants, you are dealing

with a more sensitive segment of society, one with problems, if you will. These sensitivities and problems are often considered abnormal and immigrants are seen as being on the fringes of normality, a little like handicapped people. So let's stick with the word "difficulties". Everything done in a pluralistic society, everything that we think of for those in difficulty, is better for the others, this relationship with the others... If it means taking measures, well then they must be studied and taken. Because, as I said, in thinking about those who have difficulties, we create the social dynamics that leads us to do more for others at the same time. But we mustn't think about those for whom... where everything is fine. We must think of those who aren't doing alright. And that is the case for this segment you're referring to. You're absolutely right. There's no question about it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thirty seconds.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Last question. In a multicultural, multiconfessional Québec, this pluralistic Québec society, what, in your opinion, are the best school structures: confessional school structures or linguistic ones? (2:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Taranu:** I'll deal with the confessional structure first. We think "no", the confessional structure only marginalizes, at least that is our view, what we have perceived, what we have found to date. Is it a question of approach, of feeling? I don't know. I'm speaking of our results about the confessional school system. As far as the linguistic school system is concerned, I think that in terms of defending the French language in Québec, language is called upon to express this cultural pluralism, linguistic school boards, I think that... I don't know if there have been any studies of what that has achieved elsewhere, but I believe they'd work. Then, what is also marginalizing is religious instruction in confessional schools. It is often a source of conflict and hostility among the students, and then there's the constant ill-feeling, which is not healthy or encouraging for the students.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you Mr. Taranu. Mrs. Pagé's time is now up. It's Mr. Holden's turn now, and then Mr. Turgeon.

**Mr. Holden:** Mr. Taranu, it warms my heart to read in your brief that the federal link should be retained, because our base is pan-Canadian and because, being a Quebecer, as defined in your brief, and being a Canadian are not incompatible. I have always believed that. And I congratulate you on coming here, on presenting this brief. I think it has done some good. We're all immigrants or descendants of immigrants. Everyone in this room, those working in televi-



sion, all of us. We are all immigrants. So, I am congratulating you, because for me, as an immigrant of some 200 years, it may be less difficult to come before the Commission, and I congratulate you. We, our group, we tried to amend the bill striking this Commission so that someone from the cultural communities – and I know my friend, Mr. Maciocia, whom I respect greatly, has to toe the Party line – so we tried to have a representative from the cultural communities specially appointed to this Commission. But the government wouldn't agree. So, I want you to know that we are with you, except perhaps in one minor way. You say that you accept the fact that free choice in education, you accept that it doesn't exist. What I want to ask, because I, since my elementary school education was in English, I have the right, and my children have the right, to be educated in English – do you see a difference in the treatment between immigrants who want to be educated in English and myself? Because we are all immigrants. Do you see a kind of double standard there?

**Mr. Taranu:** Yes. First of all, I thank you for your kind congratulations. We spoke from the heart and based on the consensus we reached during the various commissions we have attended, the symposiums we've held.

As far as free choice is concerned, I myself remember, and you mentioned your colleague, who is of Italian descent... As far as free choice is concerned, the price was paid by the Italian community. It was then, the break which occurred between the Conseil des minorités ethniques, I am talking about 1968...

**Mr. Holden:** The Saint-Léonard period?

**Mr. Taranu:** That's right.

**Mr. Holden:** O.K.

**Mr. Taranu:** No, a little before that. It was 1966 to be exact. Earlier. We had joined the English-speaking community in the fight for free choice in education, the free choice of parents, needless to say. At a given moment, the members of the Conseil des minorités ethniques who were mostly English-speaking, and English people, excuse me, of long-standing, I won't say it again...

**Mr. Holden:** Like me.

**Mr. Taranu:** Yes... They dropped us because they told us, we English, we were born here, we have "acquired rights". You immigrants, you don't have any. And that was it; there was a break. That is when the Conseil des minorités ethniques was born, and then Alliance Québec, and the Fédération des groupes ethniques which

saw itself as French-speaking. So, to answer you now, I would have to look back some 20 years, and it is very difficult now for me to speak about the injustice you feel, since I felt it some twenty years ago from your community, when we should have... but things have changed since then... joined forces and continued to fight for free choice in education.

**Mr. Holden:** If I may, Mr. Chairman...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Please. You still have time.

**Mr. Holden:** A statement and a question. Now that we have learned, to our cost, how it feels to be marginalized and to be refused our own language outside our own stores, perhaps we need to reflect, and you do reflect, are you ready to look farther ahead, for your children and your grandchildren, perhaps to examine the question of free choice in education again?

**Mr. Taranu:** No. My answer is no. Things have changed. To create a pluralistic Québec society, we will have to follow the flow, the direction. And things are moving in that direction. If we don't take it any further, if we don't move in that direction, we will be marginalized again. We will again be a minority. You've seen that we asked not to be called minorities. We are here to become full-fledged citizens, not citizens kept apart, as I have been in the habit of saying since Mrs. Harel was Minister of Cultural Communities.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Turgeon, who will be followed by Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Integration can take many forms, and in the wake of what Mr. Holden said, I would like to give an example, and I think that my comrade Mr. Nicolet won't be angry at me for doing so. Mr. Nicolet was born in Belgium, raised in Switzerland, and he is sitting here on a truly Quebecois commission. I think that shows a fine degree of integration and he doesn't seem to be marginalized at all.

What I would like to know, Mr. Taranu, is how maintaining the federal link, for you, guarantees the protection of your fundamental rights. And why a Québec, a hypothetically sovereign Québec, master of its immigration policy, with a charter acknowledging its rights, its collective rights in particular, why wouldn't such a Québec give you as much or even more guarantees?

**Mr. Taranu:** Well, my answer to that is quite clear. You know, I don't trust you. We are

people who left our countries because we didn't have fundamental rights. And we selected Canada, which respected those fundamental rights. So you see, historical and very powerful links have marked us from the start, and since we have not lived under an independent Québec, you are asking too much of me if I tell you what I think of respect...

**Mr. Turgeon:** Your fear is a fear of the unknown?

**Mr. Taranu:** For me, yes, everything unknown, no, this isn't a great mystery. How, in an independent Québec, pure and simple, how our fundamental rights would be respected... I don't know, I really don't, it's never happened before. So, if you want me to go a little farther, do it, and we'll see, we'll tell you then. There will be other commissions like this one...

**Mr. Turgeon:** In short, you came to Canada, you didn't come to Québec?

**Mr. Taranu:** Well, that's not the case, at least according to what I've heard and what my acquaintances say. I think that French culture, which has spread through Europe, not only in western Europe where I am from, or central Europe, but throughout Europe and the whole world, was an attraction. Really, my principal motivation and that of my wife and my son, who was born in Paris, the primary one, was to come to Québec, a French Québec in North America, because we were in France. But France at that time was a three-hour bicycle ride from Berlin. The Russians could come meet us in Paris and find us. You see that the question you are asking about fundamental rights doesn't harm the answers you are looking for, but I can't say yes.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Do you make a distinction between the multiculturalism which is a Canadian policy, as practised by Canada, and a policy, a real policy of integration of immigrants, for example, into the community?

**Mr. Taranu:** No. An immigrant is someone who is looking for something better. As long as the phase of welcome, adaptation and integration goes on, things move along. It's when you get to the fourth phase, when you talk about assimilation - we abhor that word because it is biologically impossible, because it leads only to a racist society, in my opinion, if you want to assimilate others.

**Mr. Turgeon:** I'm not speaking of assimilation. I'm speaking of integration, which is not the same thing at all.

**Mr. Taranu:** They have come here for that,

for integration. It is their greatest desire, much more so than participating in a constitutional commission. But you know, to answer you correctly, in this integration relationship, there are two parties: the one that wants to integrate and the other that accepts the integrated person, and that doesn't always work, in spite of which I have no complaint, I have no reproaches to make about the hospitality of Quebecers. It doesn't last very long, but it exists. It is often magnificent but it doesn't last very long, and that may not be the fault of Quebecers, it may be ignorance and it may be our fault, because I tell you it takes two to integrate, to want to integrate.

**Mr. Turgeon:** And I would have another question. You come from Rumania, Greece, Italy and Asia: how do you react to a law in Québec that says that the common language of Québec is this one, that says the language of work in Québec is this one, and that it is not necessarily the one of the rest of Canada?

**Mr. Taranu:** It is very important for immigrants to understand, and we tell them every day, that the language of work is French. Unfortunately, when they apply for jobs, they are told, we're sorry but you aren't bilingual. So you see...

**Mr. Turgeon:** Confusion...

**Mr. Taranu:** If you want integration to take place, the language of work must be French and only French. In that respect, I am unilingual, although my children and my grandchildren who are also dyed-in-the-wool Quebecers - I have the expression from Mr. Larose - I taught them English too, but they are, if you wish, French-speaking.  
(2:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Turgeon:** Alright. A final, short question. You say that from the point of view of the language of work, you are unilingual. In what case in Québec are you bilingual?

**Mr. Taranu:** In terms of jobs, I advise everyone to learn French well, but not to forget English either. You have more opportunities, because as I said, the immigrant is someone looking for greater well-being, and that he achieves through the work he can get, and by equality of opportunity to get a job. And English helps. That is the perception we have, at least for now, for the time being.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Larose, followed by Mr. Hogue.

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

Taranu, I am very happy that you are here with us. Mr. Holden has boasted several times before the Commission of having been acquainted with Mr. Bédard in the past. André Ouellet congratulated himself for having played hockey with Mr. Jean Lambert of the Chambre de commerce. I will tell you that I congratulate myself for having married a Haitian woman and for having two children, a daughter 10 years old and a son who is 8, sort of coffee cream, and who, for me, are Quebecers by blood - whether old or new - but who are dyed-in-the-wool Quebecers.

I am somewhat sensitive to all the realities of discrimination and racism, and that is why I have taken the opportunity on several occasions to work with several of the groups you represent. This morning I read in the newspaper that a certain McGill University professor, a member of the Equality Party and also a member of a task force we will hear from tonight, the Task Force on Federalism, who said that in the long term, the objectives of the Nazis and of the authors of Bills 101 and 178 are the same, that is, to destroy a people and a culture. He added that Québec may be somewhat less violent than Germany was in 1939-1945, but that it had inherited from Nazi Germany the distinction of being the most backward corner of western civilization. I would like to hear from you, Mr. Taranu, is Québec today, pluri-ethnic Québec, is it in fact a new Nazi Germany?

**Mr. Taranu:** Yes, I think... I will speak again after, do you want to answer? Mr. Saine represents the communities of the Eastern Townships.

**Mr. Saine (Georges):** Mr. Chairman, you know discrimination has no language. It mutters in all languages. If a young or confused professor from McGill speaks in German at McGill about French Canadians, that wouldn't surprise me at all. But I can assure you of one thing. We deny it, in the sense that we can affirm for you that in our ethnic group, we have no McGill psychology professor. Now, listen, I'd like to give you a personal example. I have been here in this country for 65 years.

**Mr. Libman:** Just a point of order, Mr. Chairman, just to... I would like...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bédard):** We have tried to avoid points of order. Do you think...

**Mr. Libman:** ... simply...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bédard):** ...you absolutely have to make use of that?

**Mr. Libman:** It's simply to say that the statements...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bédard):** That's not a point of order. I'm sorry, Mr. Libman, we have proceeded in the most open, informal manner possible, and I think we would gain from continuing that way. I would be glad to add your name to those who want to participate in these questions and you may, at that time, explain what you have in mind. Please continue, Mr. Saine.

**Mr. Saine:** It makes me think that some 65 years ago, when I arrived in the country, I was just a little boy at the Seminary in Sherbrooke. I must confess to you, and it is even with fondness that I say it now, that my teachers, priests and the young French Canadians said to me: "Are you French Canadian?" I said no. "Are you English?" No. "So you must be Jewish." I wasn't insulted by that. But even as a very small boy, I said to myself what ignorance! What ignorance! They are pitiful. But I can assure you that the old Latin proverb "Nil volutum nisi precognitum" is still true. You can't want, you can't accept, you can't even love and even normally hate if you don't know the object of your love or your hate. This person, I am sure, that he is either too innocent to know, or he is dishonest and has another goal in mind. And both I think are good enough to simply deny it. Does that satisfy you?

**Mr. Taranu:** In any case, Mr. Chairman, since the question was addressed to me, I can make a very short answer. No. Bill 101 is not a Nazi law, absolutely not, and I can say so since I have known such laws and had to live under them.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bédard):** Another question, Mr. Larose?

**Mr. Larose:** In the position of the groups from the cultural communities, it is obvious, and you said it to us in your presentation, there has been an evolution which is quite, I would say, in keeping with the new balance of power that has developed in our society. I would say in "Old Québec", in the colonized Québec, where the minority was not only playing the tune in economic affairs but also socially and culturally, was the group that could polarize what I would call the "newcomers" in modern Québec, where the Francophone majority succeeded in carving itself a place, the one it was entitled to, by completely respecting the fundamental rights and, in this sense, the right for a bootmaker to post signs in English has nothing to do with a fundamental right of individuals speaking French to see their language be not merely operational but also considered of value. Don't we do a good thing by not turning to your groups and not asking the immigrants who land in Québec to be the judges, if not the cannon fodder, of a

discussion and a debate that belongs, yes to the Francophone majority, to be resolved with all of its social components?

In other words, do the groups want, and I think that it was what was done recently, the question to be resolved once and for all, so that they know exactly what the rules of the game are?

**Mr. Taranu:** Of course. We hope, as I said, that this is the last parliamentary commission, expanded or not, to which we present a brief because it gets rather tedious.

To your question, I would answer "no", but for the opposite reason. It is the goal of our Fédération to get involved in the national debate. We believe that one way of integrating is to participate in the national debate and not to reflect the divisions, the terminology that I asked be suspended from our vocabulary, I mean words like "minority", "majority", etc. I think that the national question is the question of the future of our children and of another time that there is still, well, we should be present at your side, not over here. We have been here for 40 years, and we've had enough, you understand? Because we think that we can, at your side, participate in the decisions that are taken for us, as I said, and I think that we better understand ourselves, just as you better understand your...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Hogue now has the floor, followed by Mr. Libman.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Taranu, I heard our colleague Holden and my fellow commissioner Larose make a bit of history of their past. I arrived in Québec just before Mr. Holden. When I was very young, I would go to Morgan's or to other stores, and I would try, with my parents, to buy things in French and I couldn't. When I finished my classical course and I wanted to go get a doctorate in the United States, I had to learn English. They gave me a doctorate but they also tried to put me in that melting pot, in that "big goulash". And when I returned to Ontario and Montréal, there were some who at certain moments told me to "speak white". I have remained a French Canadian, and I married a Canadian, who is also French-speaking. And at the end of my travels, I am the representative of a multicultural riding, the riding of Outremont, where there is a whole mass of people called immigrants.

I wonder, and I ask you this question: Can protecting your culture, protecting your language, help protect mine?

**Mr. Taranu:** I beg your pardon?

**Mr. Hogue:** The protection of mine, of my

French language. I repeat my question. Does the fact...

**Mr. Taranu:** Ah. I see.

**Mr. Hogue:** You've understood.

**Mr. Taranu:** Yes, it has been proven, and Mrs. Pagé can perhaps confirm this, that children who are taught, in public school systems, in their native language are more dynamic, they have more self esteem and they feel more at home. They are aware that life goes on in French but the fact that they have a different language, and that language is taught, gives them self-esteem and their performance is better.

**Mr. Hogue:** Does your Fédération and the ethnic groups insist that your children must be able to learn their mother tongue, I mean the language of their mothers, the language they are born with, and keep their culture alive, so that we, those of us of Québec stock, I repeat, can grow with your support?

**Mr. Taranu:** I spoke of the intercultural, which is a goal of our Fédération. And my experience, our experience, has convinced me, and I am convinced that exchanges can only take place through values that are universal, that is, values that are common to you and to me. It is from the top, if you wish, that we make the connection... and this connection that is made on the top of the scale of values, these are values that will become part of Québec culture. Culture is something that is always a bit ahead of us. It is not exactly what we want to have today, it is what you are going to decide about the political and cultural future of Québec. What emerges will be the result of these discussions taking place at the very lowest level of the people and at the level of the creators of culture who exist in a society and whose job it is to give French new value for the newcomers.

(3:00 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We have now used up the time for this period, but I will give Mr. Libman the floor for a few minutes, from the Chair's time. Mr. Libman.

**Mr. Libman:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I asked for the floor just to specify that the comparison made between Québec and the Nazi regime obviously does not represent either the opinion of the Equality Party or the opinion of the Task Force on Canadian Federalism. Such a comparison is not only harmful but it also deeply wounds the Jewish community of Québec, to which I belong, and in knowing Mr. Larose a bit better today than I did two weeks ago, I assume that he did not intend to make the link between such a comparison and another political party. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Larose, I also allow you a little bit of the Chair's time.

**Mr. Larose:** Let me clarify that Mr. Dondri is in fact a member of the same task force as Mr. Libman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you for the clarification. Mr. Libman has nevertheless indicated that he was not formally presenting the views of the group. I think that the Chair will now resume its time to be able to get back to business, and we will go to the next group of questions, which is from the government party, and Mr. Gil Rémillard is first.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, let me tell you ladies and gentlemen how pleased we are to have you with us this afternoon. The last time we met, I think, was when the government made its statement on inter-ethnic and interracial relations. It is a way for the government to show its attachment to the fact that we are all Quebecers, all equal, striving for the same common goal, and that is a principle which we continually emphasize for ourselves.

Mr. Chairman, I noticed with a great deal of pleasure in this brief that you presented, a great deal of openness, a lot of relations with a Québec which is open to the world and which is proud of its Quebecers, whose origins may be virtually anywhere in the world. And I was particularly touched on page 6 of your brief, in the last paragraph, when you say: "We ask you to suggest for this new Québec that you banish from your vocabulary such words as "Québec stock, old or recent," "imported immigrants", "new Quebecers", and even "minorities". And you are right, with respect to the concept of minority which in itself has a core of discrimination in it — some might say positive but, it is still true that for me, it seems that it is a term we should not refer to but rather refer to a common good which exists and which allows us all to live together in freedom and democracy.

Mr. Chairman, recently, it was expressed very clearly by the group you represent, Mr. Taranu, that you hoped for the immediate signature by the federal government of this Canada-Québec agreement on immigration, an agreement whose signing is being delayed by the federal government, an agreement which enables us to integrate our immigrants — because in this respect it is the immigrants, and for the government it is very important to make this distinction between assimilation and integration. For us, it is very important to benefit from the cultural elements of all possible groups, of all possible origins, since we all share a common good that is to be determined in our democracy, in our freedom. There is a world of difference between

assimilation and integration; we feel this element is fundamental. My question is: Why do you think it so important for the federal government to sign this agreement with Québec?

**Mr. Taranu:** We are for Canadian unity in the framework we have described and presented. So we thought that... asking for the signature on this agreement, which is less than was provided in Meech Lake, for which we had a symposium. We said we agreed, not only did we agree, we publicized our agreement with the Meech Lake Accord. So when Québec asked less than was in the Meech Lake Accord, since it is a question which can be negotiated directly with Ottawa, you don't need to bring all 11 ministers back together. I wanted to test the good faith of what I support here, the Canadian unity that comes from Ottawa, test their good faith and urge them to sign this agreement, even before your honourable commission ends its work. It was a test, and we said so openly. And we say so in the brief, as well.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Thank you.

**Mr. Taranu:** The other question. As far as minorities and all those other terms are concerned, you see, we find that somewhat insulting. You are perfectly right. It insults us and it isolates us. They are stigma. Because I came here to become a Quebecer. O.K., perhaps my homeland is not Québec. But I assure you that it is my children's and my grandchildren's. So why call me "minority"? Why call me an "import" and so on? You know, it's insulting. So you are perfectly right. We agree entirely.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Yes. Just now, Dr. Saine gave us a touching testimony of his own experience and his integration into Québec society. We know how greatly appreciated a physician he is in the Eastern Townships. And he spoke of this change in Québec society, which is clearly showing itself to be more and more open. And we are far from the xenophobia of the 1950s. It has disappeared despite some who still want to go out on a witch hunt. But in your brief, on page 6, in the new constitutional framework to which you refer, vaguely, but to which you refer, you say: There are five pre-requisites. The territorial integrity of Canada, Canadian citizenship, national defence with a single army, Canadian currency and a single central bank and, finally, economic association. So that still leaves a great deal of room to imagine various constitutional models?

**Mr. Taranu:** Of course, we are not constitutional experts. We simply made a suggestion. For example, we added the words "economic association". Because if you read our report, you see we wanted to avoid the words "independence,"

sovereignty, etc. In that area, Mariane Botta suggested a way, for example, for the currency question. I would like to let her speak.

**Mrs. Botta (Miriane):** Hello. As far as currency is concerned, we agree, not necessarily being specialists, that if you look at what is going on around the world, at this time, with globalization, with the events in Europe, to facilitate trade, it would be good to have a currency, for unity. Also, a central bank with provincial representatives who carried some weight. And then to decide on this weight... that would have to be decided in the new organization. But we do agree on keeping a single currency, as a means of facilitating trade.

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

**Mr. Maciocia:** I would first of all, Mr. Chairman, like to repeat the statement made by Mr. Holden earlier. That is that we all agreed on having a representative of the cultural communities on this Commission. But we had to draw the line somewhere. I also agreed. But we must not forget one thing: it is very important to the members of this Commission. This Commission results from a mandate of the National Assembly, it is not a political party or the current government. We all have a responsibility, ultimately, to decide the political future of Québec after this Commission. And as I said at the beginning, in my remarks on Tuesday, I am here with an open mind, with a desire to listen to the people who come to present their points of view before the Commission. And at the end, you can be sure that I will do my duty, as a representative of this Commission, assume my responsibilities. We mustn't forget that my origins are Italian and from the cultural communities. I am proud of my Italian origin, and at the same time, I am proud to be a Quebecer. Be assured that when the time comes, I will shoulder my responsibilities as a member of this Commission, and also as a member from a cultural community. You can be sure of that.

There can be no doubt that there are problems. Everyone knows that. We had problems in the 1950s and the early 1960s, the immigrants, the people who came here. But we must not forget either that even Québec society had problems in those years, in the 1950s and early 1960s. But for a while now, since the 1970s, we can honestly say that the cultural communities have been treated very differently. I don't feel marginal. Even if there are still things to be improved – and obviously nothing's perfect – I am convinced that the cultural communities today are an integral part of Québec society. And the integration of these communities brings with it some sacrifices, I would say, sometimes it is

even necessary to disregard the pride of these communities, of ourselves. But it's been done, and today we can say that we are proud to be integrated in this way in Québec society. (3:15 p.m.)

The only question I would like to ask you, Mr. Taranu, is this. You recommend a degree of repatriation of power from the government of Québec and of Ottawa. You know very well, we all know, that you supported the Meech Lake Accord. In what framework and in what way do you anticipate that we could, at this time, negotiate with the federal government?

**Mr. Saine:** Mr. Chairman, if you don't mind, let's forget the ethnic groups for the moment. Let's think Québec, exclusively Québec, without parties, neutral Québec. What we seem to see is that there are so many possibilities, so many options. There is federalism – I won't say the word – but with a cord so taut it will break. There is decentralized federalism, there is the Swiss system, there is out-and-out independence, there is the European system as it is now developing and will perhaps take another 30 years to reach the system we have today. There is all that. So which option? The only option I see is that we must not reinvent the wheel. We must not start all over. We have a system that is very good. Federalism, not confederalism. But let us just understand each other. When we say federalism, we don't mean... you have to distinguish between the principle and the implementation, the practice.

So far, we have certainly not followed the spirit of the original British North America Act. We have gradually deviated and have centralized to such a point that the cords are breaking. There's no way to go back in time and to try would be stupid. But it is still an excellent system. It's not the system that's at fault.

I'd like to quote one of my friends who, one day, said to me: "The current feeling of uneasiness is not necessarily due to the federal system as such; it is due to the emotional, utilitarian, individualist, electoralist practice of our Canadian democracy." Where are our statesmen? Are we going... things...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Excuse me for interrupting you but we have completed this period. But I will give you 30 seconds to finish your sentence.

**Mr. Saine:** I continue? The conclusion is to correct federalism to make it a decentralized federalism.

**A voice:** Autonomous states.

**Mr. Saine:** Semi-autonomous states. And actually, our states are already semi-autonomous. But give them...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Dr. Saine. Taranu.

**Mr. Saine:** ...the prerogatives that they want and concentrate activities or, I would even say, departments with which they agree. But these mechanisms should always be studied closely by sociologists, legal scholars and historians, because we don't want to repeat history if we don't read it. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** As our Commission has the intention of doing, Dr. Saine. Thank you. We have now finished this block of questions, and we now turn to the set of questions from the party forming the Official Opposition. Mr. Gérald Godin is the first speaker.

**Mr. Godin:** Mr. Taranu, welcome. I would like to call your attention to two things. You ask us to go back and negotiate Meech Lake. I think that you could describe people who want to do that as "maso-federalists", by which I mean a mixture of the word masochist and the word federalist. And I hope that after our 20 years of friendship, you haven't become a maso-federalist, Dr. Taranu. Moreover, in a press release issued by your Fédération, yesterday, you equated the federal link and respect for federal rights. You are experienced enough to know that Canadian federalism, Canadian or Soviet, is by no means a paragon of respect for fundamental rights. The opposite is true. And I personally remember something called the "War Measures Act", which was a federal law and which contravened fundamental rights.

So I wonder why you assume that Canadian federalism incarnates fundamental rights, whereas a sovereign Québec would incarnate the opposite? Could you explain to me the contradiction between a press release, one that is insulting to Québec when all is said and done, I think it was dated November 13, which summarized your brief and in which I see this sentence: "The Fédération des groupes ethniques assures the respect for fundamental rights." This suggests if you read between the lines that Québec doesn't.

I ask you if that is really what you think and if it is, I ask you to withdraw your press release because I think it is insulting for Quebecers whom you have chosen as fellow countrymen and for the Québec you have chosen as your new homeland. So, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Taranu, I think that this press release is insulting to Québec, to its history and its behaviour, and I ask Dr. Taranu to withdraw it from the package he is distributing to the press here. So those are my questions and my remarks, Mr. Chairman. I'm finished.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Dr.

**Mr. Taranu:** You want me to withdraw my press release?

**Mr. Godin:** Yes, the whole paragraph. That would reassure me and even more, it would your respect for Québec, Quebecers and Québec history, which consists and which has always consisted of respecting religions, groups, races and even sexual preferences. As a result, Mr. Chairman, I formally ask the President of the Fédération des groupes ethniques, who is the spokesperson here, to take steps to have that paragraph removed from the press release issued yesterday, to summarize the brief tabled today. Because I consider that the federal link as a holder of fundamental rights is a fraud and does not in any way correspond to the reality that 500 Quebecers experienced a few years ago, including your humble servant and his wife. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Taranu:** Really, I don't understand what it is you want me to withdraw. I would be happy to, but I really don't understand. If you could read me again the paragraph that you...

**Mr. Godin:** I'll give you a copy of the press release...

**Mr. Taranu:** ...it's on the first page?

**Mr. Godin:** ...first page, yes, one, two, three, four, fifth paragraph...

**Mr. Taranu:** The ...yes. "We insist on the federal link..."

**Mr. Godin:** Which begins with the words "We insist on the federal link", yes.

**Mr. Taranu:** You feel that if we insist on the federal link, we are insulting the history of Québec.

**Mr. Godin:** No, to systematically link... equate the federal link with fundamental rights seems to me insulting to Québec and to Québec sovereignty and even the sovereignty of all countries that themselves abide by human rights, I would say, religiously. That has been the case in Québec since...

**Mr. Taranu:** Mr. Godin, I was there in the 1970s, in the month of October, and you can rest assured that if you ask me to tell you that it was a fundamental law, it wasn't at all. It was an abuse, the war measures...

**Mr. Godin:** Mr. Chairman, I think that...

**Mr. Taranu:** ...It was a way of cleaning...

**Mr. Godin:** ...that answers my question.

**Mr. Taranu:** ...a courtyard with a tank, with a bulldozer.

**Mr. Godin:** I consider myself satisfied, Mr. Chairman, with Mr. Taranu's answer.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** That answer satisfies you, Mr. Godin?

**Mr. Godin:** Completely, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Godin:** And I thank Dr. Taranu.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We now move on to Mrs. Harel.

**Mrs. Harel:** Ladies and gentlemen of the Fédération des groupes ethniques, it is rather exciting to work with this Commission because it helps clarify certain issues that often people would rather see all confused. The first is the issue of immigration, and my colleague, Mr. Holden, won't hold it against me if I remind him that it's since Adam and Eve, and it's like that everywhere, that we are all immigrants. It's that way for the United States, for France, and in any country. The big question is that in the United States, everything goes on in English, west of Ottawa, everything goes on in English, and in France, everything goes on in French. So, it doesn't say everything when we say, for example, that in our delegation, three members of the Opposition have spouses who are not of French-Canadian origin. That proves quite simply that we are multiethnic in Québec.

Indeed, I would mention Mr. Parizeau's brief to remind you all to what extent this multiethnicity can succeed. So, it says nothing and yet it says something. What do we mean when we say that? Do we mean that there is no collective right? That there is no historical right? That there is no historic perspective and no people? That is the question that must be asked. And if we take the answer of the mayor of Sault-Ste-Marie, who didn't understand why Italian wasn't the second official language of his city, because there were more Italians than French Canadians among his fellow citizens, there we can see that because we are all immigrants in this country, claiming that there are some who came a long time ago and others who came more recently, it completely empties, eliminates, sets aside collective rights, those of the Québec people. That is perhaps the first issue that should be asked when speaking of immigration, or be clarified at least, and perhaps the second on fundamental rights.

I don't hold it against you, but last week

the Commission received representatives from the Commission des droits de la personne and the question was asked of a specialist on the subject, Me Morel, who was accompanying the Chairman of the Commission, and who was extremely clear in this respect and said, and I will quote him, "I want to remind you that in the history of federal legislation and executive power, there have been a number of actions that do not exactly do Canada honour with respect to rights and freedoms", and he quoted: "Whether it was the way that federal Canada treated Canadian Japanese citizens" - you know that Canada is constantly apologizing for the way it treated its citizens, and now Italian citizens - and he added, "It is after all the federal Parliament that adopted the War Measures Act," and in fact, the Commission concluded that there was nothing other than the will of people and the instrument that they adopt in terms of a constitution that can guarantee rights, not a political system, whether it is federal or unitary.

That in fact was the third question, and I would ask you the question of identity. Dr. Saine, I found it particularly interesting. You said in your brief you want to avoid words. So if we avoid words, do we also have to avoid French Canadian? What do we do to be Quebecers one and all? I understand that individually, personally, we can belong to many... If you wish, you can be of both Italian and Québec origin, or you can be of Rumanian origin, like you, Dr. Taranu, I think, and a Quebecer. But the national identity of a people, can that be twofold at once? It is a little like language. Those who say that we must put both languages on the same footing usually are the ones who have two feet on the same language. But isn't the same thing true of national identity? That is what I would ask you.

**Mr. Taranu:** Well, let me tell you, if you don't mind, to separate the things a bit, that being French Canadian was your identity. I can understand it. Now that Québec is moving towards greater autonomy or even towards independence, well, that will have to be done with everyone, not just with French Canadians. It will have to be done with those who are now called Quebecers, and I again refer you to Mr. Landry. I really liked his definition of a Quebecer, someone who lives in Québec and loves Québec sufficiently to consider it his homeland.

From this perspective, I ask for the change in terminology as if by accepting it, you people of French Canadian stock, you founding people, call it what you will, you agree to become Quebecers like me. And at that point, we are all equals, and we can sense you at our side and embark on a new solidarity. If you tell me, O.K., you speak French but your mother tongue is not French, so you will not become part of the



Québec nation, so you have no collective rights, etc... well, I won't go along with it. On the other hand, fundamental rights are more concrete for us, affect us directly, whereas collective rights from the standpoint of a Québec, a state, a culture, well collective rights like that don't mean anything to me. They are abstract for us, the neo-Quebecers.

I don't know if I have answered your question, but I think that...  
(3:30 p.m.)

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

**Mr. Parizeau:** A comment, Mr. Chairman, to complete the participation by our side. Mr. Taranu, what struck me just now in what you said is that we are not specialists in these constitutional questions. I don't believe you. I think that on the contrary you are and have always been, especially in Eastern Europe. If there is someone who is a specialist in constitutional matters, it is usually someone who comes from Eastern Europe.

Mr. Taranu, you are of Rumanian origin, and you know very well that since the First World War, Transylvania has been a problem in Rumania. I had that shock as a person of Ukrainian origin. The problems of the Ukraine between Russia and Poland, you know those better than anyone.

Mr. Trzcinski, my God, the same thing! Your problems with the Ruthenians, with the Ruthenians, Mr. Saine, as an Armenian, where is your homeland? Well once it was but now you are in Québec. Your country divided into three countries and the Armenians, the terrible genocide, right?

**Mr. Saine:** Mr. Chairman...

**Mr. Parizeau:** But I know, I know all that. You know better than all of us, except me, at what point, at a given time, you have to define for yourself a nationality. And when you say in your brief, "We must maintain the territorial integrity of Canada", you probably know better than most of the people around the table here what that means. It means maintaining Canadian citizenship. You know very well what that means. And you say, "and maintain Canadian unity, which results from those two things."

And when, on the other hand, as for the role of Québec, you say, "Québec must be recognized as the homeland of French language and culture in North America", you know very well that in terms of national identity, in some respects, that's meaningless, right? That has no legal implication, none at all.

So what you say this afternoon, and you have the greatest right to say it, of course, is: "We are Canadians, we have the intention of remaining so, and Québec will be the home for a

language somewhere within this Canadian country of Canada that we belong to. It's normal, to an extent, that some of you say that. I don't know to what extent that represents an absolutely general opinion in what is called the cultural communities, but after all, you have a perfect right to say it, but why not say it clearly? Why not come right out and say it: Our country is Canada, and we intend to keep it. That would certainly be clearer for everyone.

**Mr. Taranu:** I think that is what we said. Is there anyone else? No? Can I answer?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Yes... comments.

**Mr. Taranu:** I think that is what we said. Now you find some incompatibility between a mother country, which for me is not meaningless. It is a blueprint for society. "Blueprint for society", well that means that it's on its way.

As far as the ambiguity is concerned, and Mr. Godin mentioned it too, and you have gone into it even further. It comes from the fact that for you, being a Quebecer and a Canadian is incompatible. But for us it is compatible. If you put yourself at that level, I don't say that it is higher than yours. No, because I am speaking of a blueprint for society that would be the homeland, after all, of the French language and culture in North America. But if ever for you there was no incompatibility, you would see that perhaps we are late, but that, in this respect, we are not contradictory. There is nothing ambiguous in what we have just written or said.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Well, thank you, Dr. Taranu. The people of your group, who represent several backgrounds, have given us a good idea of what might be a consensus. At least, we can grasp that you all agree on stressing the importance of participation in the French life of Québec. Thank you. And I ask you not to rush away but first to accept our thanks, Mr. Trzcinski, Mrs. Botta, Dr. Saine, Mr. Prysziak, Mr. Lee, and you too, Dr. Taranu, and to make way for the next group, who will take your place in a few minutes. Thank you.

**Mr. Taranu:** We would like to thank you, as well, for listening to us.

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

(Proceedings resumed at 3:42 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Could we now have the next group come take their place, please?

**A voice:** Thank you.

### **Alliance des professeurs et professeurs de Montréal**

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** If the ladies and gentlemen of the Commission would please go back to their seats, we will now welcome the Alliance des professeurs et professeurs de Montréal. This group will be with us for an hour, which means that the speaking time for the various groups will be 10 minutes for the group presenting its brief, 10 minutes for the government group, 10 minutes for the Opposition group, and 25 minutes for the members who have registered with the Chair, with 5 minutes for each member.

Mr. Grenon, if you would introduce the people accompanying you and then take 10 minutes to present your brief, which has been distributed to the members and read by them. Mr. Grenon.

**Mr. Grenon (Denis):** Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, before going into the content of our brief, let me introduce Louise Drouin and Claudette Vachon, vice-president of the Alliance des professeurs et professeurs de Montréal, on my right, and Henry Egretaud a staff consultant with us, on my left.

Let me begin by thanking you for receiving representatives of the Alliance. We think that we have something important to say to you, and are particularly pleased to be here since the Commission has received a large number of briefs and has had to limit the number of hearings. This avalanche of briefs in fact shows how much importance Quebecers attach to your work and to their future.

Today you have before you French-speaking teachers from Montréal. Even though, as citizens of an uncertain country, we have opinions on various aspects of the future of Québec, we decided to broach only those subjects closely linked to our professional duties. We did not discuss all the subjects that concern us. We could have talked about the Native issue, spoken about the impoverishment of a growing proportion of those we serve and discussed the future of our English-speaking neighbours. We have limited ourselves to just a few subjects that we think we can discuss because we know them intimately and encounter them on a daily basis.

In all the areas mentioned in our brief, we observed that the current constitutional framework does a disservice to our community and prevents it from evolving as it wishes and as it should. We will not dwell on the absurd story of the reorganization of school structures. Virtually all education departments of all Québec governments have wanted to reform structures devised in the 19th century and corresponding to the realities of that distant era.

All these reforms have failed because of the constitutional concrete that guarantees the

privileges of another age. We understand very well that the holders of these privileges defend them. We cannot accept the fact that laws or charters whose purpose is to defend the public good serve only individual interests. And we find it even more unacceptable that today's politicians do not seek to modify these laws and charters.

In our brief we also touch on the problems encountered by Québec in the fields of culture and communications. If Québec wants to continue to be Québec, it must immediately acquire the means of developing its culture while opening up to others. The are two main reasons for Canada's not being an American state today: first, in the 18th century, the English here decided to remain loyal to their country and their king; and second, in the 20th century, the French-speakers here decided to remain speakers of French. In a world that is living in the fast lane, in which radio waves and diskettes penetrate the most impenetrable borders, the consolidation of national cultures is the only way left to us to avoid a planet with a unique and necessarily primary culture, i.e. without a culture other than the one that enables us to find our way.

As for language, we hope that all present will recognize that it is the duty of French-speaking teachers to accord great importance to the status of their language. To affirm the primacy of French in Québec does not mean to force non-Francophones to speak the official language in their bedrooms. What goes on there is none of our business, as a former prime minister, who was a fan of multiculturalism, used to say.

Québec's English-speaking community also has the right to be proud of its language and culture. It has a duty to respect and enrich it, which means not submitting blindly to head-shrinking Americanization.

We are not advocating denying the languages of our fellow Quebecers of other origins: their cultures must continue to enrich ours. But we must not rebuild the tower of Babel. A people must have a common means of communication. Failing such a means, there are not two solitudes but a multitude of solitudes that ignore each other, mistrust each other or confront each other. We reject this multiculturalism consisting of solitudes. We need a common language in Québec. That language can only be French. Well, we all know that thanks to the federal spirit, the rights of a shoe salesman carry more weight than the will of our National Assembly.

In the area of immigration, we know that we have some rather unusual comments to share. Few people in Québec or elsewhere can claim to have experienced what we, as teachers, have experienced in just a few years. A numerically small population and a fragile culture. A people that has never governed itself, been fully

autonomous, has had to and must still integrate, without much help, a large number of people coming from all over the world. We all know that the phenomenon of immigration to Québec is experienced almost exclusively in Montréal, and results in profound changes in the demographic, cultural and social fabric. We ask schools to integrate these children in French, while the gouvernement du Québec cannot have a policy of integration because the federal government, the one that grants citizenship, is theoretically bilingual and in majority English. No legislative sophistication can hide that fact.

Finally, we mention, as do many others, the vital question of manpower and training. We are not revealing any secrets when we affirm that dual federal-provincial jurisdiction prevents Québec from having its own training and employment policy. But we feel the need to warn against the temptation of saying: Give Québec full powers in these areas, period. We feel that complete jurisdiction must go hand-in-hand with control of financial resources. Otherwise Québec would remain only a vassal of a federal lord meting out resources as he sees fit. On a construction site there has to be one foreman — certainly not two giving different orders.

Our analysis of the situation logically points to one sure fact: the future of Québec depends on Québec's affirming its autonomy. It's true that we hear people boasting of the economic prosperity we benefit from, through Canada, and telling us that independence would be an economic disaster. So the red Maple Leaf appears to be paradise, and the blue Fleur-de-lis, hell. Strange reversal, wouldn't you say?

Economic success? Definitely. In spite of Ottawa, sometimes, Québec has achieved a standard of living and productivity comparable to other industrialized nations. But the term "success" is somewhat misplaced when you consider the enormity of the Canadian debt. A company in such straits would doubtless already have declared bankruptcy.

On the other hand, no thinking person can imagine a sovereign Québec, completely autonomous or isolated. No one. Political sovereignty and economic independence are two distinct areas. It is not true that economic co-operation requires political integration. But it is true, on the other hand, that to cooperate, you have to consider yourselves equals, and that interdependence can only occur between independent partners, each of whom freely agrees to sacrifice a bit of sovereignty.

In concluding this brief presentation, please allow me to cite an example drawn from our experience as teachers. There comes a time in life when a child grows up and leaves home. There's nothing terrifying in it. The young adult takes risks in order to affirm his autonomy but in doing so wins the respect of his family. He doesn't destroy it and continues to maintain

links with it. On the other hand, if the separation does not occur harmoniously and naturally, the family links become fragile and eventually break.

As teachers, we help our students become autonomous and sovereign. We would like the Québec people to do the same. Such autonomy is not necessarily a break. I would call it progress. Independence is doubtless the shock that Canada and Québec need to bring new faith back to politics.

You will have understood from reading our brief that the Alliance des professeurs de Montréal (sic) affirms that Québec has the right to self-determination despite the Canadian constitution, which does not recognize the right to separate. Québec must become the sole master of its policies, at least in the following fields: language, education, immigration, culture and communications, individual and collective rights, manpower and training.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Grenon. You took a few extra seconds, but it's a good start, nevertheless. Let's go for the first set of questions to the party forming the government. 10 minutes. Mr. Rémillard is first, I believe.

**Mr. Rémillard:** We're first... are you sure, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Well, that's how it's entered on my agenda.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Fine. You know, Mr. Chairman. To begin with, Mr. Chairman...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** But I'm not absolutely certain. If you want to give the floor to someone else, I would be happy to.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Let's start, Mr. Chairman, and with a great deal of pleasure, I might add, because I am pleased to welcome Mr. Grenon, ladies and gentlemen, this afternoon. I read your brief very carefully. I read it to the very end so that I could finally get some answers to questions, the many questions that you ask in your brief. You ask a lot of questions. On such subjects as the constitutional status that you advocate, and I read to the conclusion, thinking that at the end, I might find an answer to those questions. But in the conclusion, you say that Québec must become the sole master of policies in the following fields: language, education, immigration, culture and communications, individual rights, collective rights, manpower and training.

Do you know that is less than what the Conference Board just presented to us? Does that mean that you accept federalism with these few changes?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You have the floor.

**Mr. Grenon:** I think, Mr. Rémillard, that I did say "at least". And I said in the presentation that we dwelled on subjects that affect us as professionals. We could talk for a long time about other aspects. Today we wanted to stick with what affects us the most as professional educators.

**Mr. Rémillard:** But are you proposing a sovereign state?

**Mr. Grenon:** I said "at least". We said "at least". We didn't speak about others, we could speak of other fields of jurisdiction and in that respect we endorse what some people have said. We endorse what the Chamber of Commerce said, but I think it is somewhat beyond our jurisdiction.

**Mr. Rémillard:** All right, Mr. Grenon. But it is simply in order to find out where you stand. Do you recommend that Québec becomes a sovereign state?

**Mr. Grenon:** Yes, I do.

**Mr. Rémillard:** O.K. So you want a new Québec society to be built, based on Québec's sovereignty.

**Mr. Grenon:** Yes, Mr. Rémillard, and that will be similar to all peoples.

**Mr. Rémillard:** O.K., Mr. Grenon. Within that context, I would refer to page 11 of your brief where you speak of individual rights and collective rights in this type of society you want to have. You even mention three situations referring to fundamental rights and freedoms. And finally, on the bottom of page 12, you state: "Need we remind you that in the Canadian Charter individual rights, which are potentially limited in the notwithstanding clause, take precedence while in the Québec Charter collective rights are more important? Do individual rights warrant more respect than those of a group? Do the privileges granted to a group take precedence over the collective good? This is a serious problem that affects our life in society, our constitutional pact and which prevents Québec from evolving as it wants." Mr. Grenon, what is your answer to your own questions? I am interested in knowing what kind of society you want to build in Québec, with a sovereign Québec.  
(4:00 p.m.)

**Mr. Grenon:** Well, I'll start and my colleagues will continue. We presented it as a question. It's important. I can tell you that today, in my classes, we must deal with this

situation. What takes precedence? Is it the Canadian Charter or the Québec Charter? You know that at this time, when rules are established in Québec, collective rules, that is, people contest it on the basis of the Canadian Charter of individual rights (sic). That has created serious problems at this very moment, but I hope that in your questioning, you are not ascribing a narrow mind...

**A voice:** Well, if...

**Mr. Grenon:** ...it must be said that we are now experiencing a situation of conflict with the two charters because they come from two jurisdictions, Québec and Ottawa...

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Grenon, I am asking questions just to narrow in on your thinking and when you say: "Need we remind you that in the Canadian Charter individual rights, which are potentially limited in the notwithstanding clause, take precedence while in the Québec Charter collective rights are more important?" That's incorrect. I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but that's completely incorrect.

**Mr. Egretaud (Henry):** May I cite a recent example? The National Assembly, which represents a society, had decided at one time to make French the official language in virtually every field and through a federal ruling, resulting from the complaints of certain individuals who felt wronged by this law, Bill 101 was transformed and, to bring out Bill 178, it was necessary even to go around... to use the "notwithstanding" clauses. There is currently a serious problem.

Let me give you an example that is even more recent. In the Québec City region... I'm not going to take immigrants... I'll take young native Quebecers... a little girl was trisomic. The School Board decided to put her in a special class, and in the name of individual rights, this little girl was put in a regular class, where her parents thought she was better integrated. These are questions... The examples we give, the three examples we pointed out, are real examples that happened in Montréal and that raise questions for our members. At this time, we have no reference point and we dream...

**Mr. Rémillard:** But as far as...

**Mr. Egretaud:** ...of a society in which there are reference points. Obviously we are wary of ethnocentrism, we do not agree with it in the least, but we are going to have to be able to base things on a social contract that is clear for everyone.

**Mr. Rémillard:** But this social contract... what I'm trying to define with you... when you

refer to the decision of the Supreme Court on languages, obviously you understand that the Supreme Court based its decision on the Canadian Charter rather than the Québec Charter, and it is false to say that the Québec Charter favours collective rights and the Canadian Charter favours individual rights. We have to agree on the words...

**Mr. Egretaud:** Except that...

**Mr. Rémillard:** ...and what I would like to say is that if you reread this passage of your brief, if you look at it in light of another sentence in the same paragraph that says: When in Rome, do as the Romans do... Let's answer a question like the one you asked about a girl who comes to class wearing an Islamic veil: What do you do? I'm asking the question because I want to understand your ideas better, and I must admit, it frightens me. It frightens me.

**Mr. Egretaud:** Us too.

**Mr. Rémillard:** How would you answer that question?

**Mr. Egretaud:** We are looking for an answer, but we'd like you to be looking as well. That's why we have come to testify here, to let you know about a situation that you will find nowhere else in Québec. You'll find it right now in our Montréal schools, Mr. Rémillard. Come take a look in our schools and you'll see what it means...

**Mr. Rémillard:** But...

**Mr. Egretaud:** ...and that is our reality today.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Yes, I understand that you are speaking about your reality, but what I want to know is your thoughts to find out what kind of society you want to build with your sovereign Québec. What I see is that you are making some kind of relationship between collective rights and individual rights, and I find that very dangerous at the outset, and then you tell us, through the three situations you describe, that you are looking for answers. I would say: Watch out. There is a grave danger there...

**Mr. Egretaud:** Where?

**Mr. Rémillard:** ...and you know that this type of dialectic has led to many excesses in the history of the world, even recently, and what you are saying frightens me.

**Mr. Grenon:** It frightens you, Mr. Rémillard, and it frightens us. But must we find ourselves with two levels of government to find a solu-

tion? In our orientation, when we reconstruct Québec, we will give it a charter. I think we have to find a balance between individual rights and collective rights without having two levels of government to find the solution.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Grenon, if what you say in your brief is true, in saying that collective rights stem from the Québec Charter, whereas individual rights stem from the Canadian Charter, my immediate response would be: Obviously! Let's keep the same system and protect ourselves with the Canadian Charter. But I tell you that what you say in your brief is incorrect.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** That uses up the time for the first set of questions. Now for the party forming the official Opposition. Mr. Chevette is the first speaker.

**Mr. Chevette:** I stand corrected, you can quote me twice. Let me congratulate you for the clarity and frankness of your message. It is quite unambiguous, and I did not interpret your silence on some aspects as being a way of avoiding it but rather, as you explained earlier, that you wanted to dwell on certain particular points, particularly those that affect you very closely, namely, education. The same was true when I read your brief. That is how I interpreted it. We will have an opportunity later to deal with certain differentiations between the charters that might make it possible to clarify the points you raised in your discussion with Mr. Rémillard. But first, allow me a very simple question. Many people come before us, present their brief, their point of view, and we always wonder, are they speaking for themselves or on behalf of the people they represent? So my first question is have you consulted the teachers of the Alliance des professeures et professeurs de Montréal?

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

**Mrs. Vachon (Claudette):** I would like to answer "yes" to this question, Mr. Chevette. In our schools, a union publication is distributed every week to all our members. We consulted our members in this union publication - before the CEQ convention last June. Let me read you the wording of our recommendation, the wording on which our members voted. It was almost a referendum: "Upon the recommendation of the general council, the congress of the CEQ in June 1990 will propose to support the principles of independence for Québec and popular sovereignty as a basis for the Constitution of this independent Québec". This was preceded by a text that had a number of whereas's, to explain the orientations to the members and explain what the orientations were based on, along with the

recommendations of the CEQ.

The whereas's clarified a number, I won't list them all for you, but a number of elements that I would like to quote here. For example, "Whereas because of its own history, its distinctive national language, its civil law, its legal, political, educational, union, cooperative and other institutions, which are specific to it, the Québec people constitute a distinct society and a true nation which has incontestably the right to self-determination; whereas Québec wishes to be a democratic society and that accordingly its political institutions and its operation as a society must be based on the principle of popular sovereignty; whereas the importance of affirming and adequately protecting fundamental freedoms and fundamental civil, political, legal, social and economic rights; and whereas - and this is an aspect that is important to us in Montréal - the multiethnic composition of Québec society and the resulting challenge for building a fraternal society which recognizes both the wealth of the cultural contributions of the various communities composing it and the need for developing a common culture that expresses itself in French". This was the framework within which we teachers were asked to express ourselves, and in this referendum, we had an 85% positive response.

**Mr. Chevette:** Thank you. Also in your brief, on pages 5 and 6, it's at the top of page 6, you say that any manoeuvre skirting this fundamental question becoming an "artifice or a delaying tactic", what do you mean by the term "delaying tactic"? What are you alluding to?

**Mr. Egretaud:** It means: If the work you are carrying out is merely an exercise in style, if it does not result in something concrete, it will give people the impression that it is a way of gaining time. Some people are already thinking this out loud. And that would be disastrous. What has to be done, I think - and it's part of the Commission's responsibility - is to ask the question about the future status of Québec, whatever it is; how to reach it, how to acquire it. There are measures to take, whatever the answer is. We must be extremely careful so that this undertaking always remains legitimate and credible for everyone. So, this must not simply be an exercise in thought that yields nothing at all or only some vague statements. Otherwise, it would be a waste of time and people will remember that. That's what this means. That's all.

**Mr. Chevette:** One final short question before giving the floor to my colleague. Could you explain to me further the benefits that Québec sovereignty would have in the field of education, for example, a field that's yours?

**Mr. Grenon:** First of all, we spoke about

vocational training. Others before us have said how complex the vocational training sector is right now. There is federal jurisdiction and provincial jurisdiction. Our brief indicated the alarming number of federal and provincial agencies that must approve a program, and that means concrete delays, in our sector, in courses that should be available, that are not available and that sometimes are available six months or a year late, because no agreement can be reached by the two levels of government.

This is important for the language issue. The messages that newcomers get from our governments now is that it is still uncertain. I can tell you a story. I was recently in a school where 41 different ethnic groups were represented. I was talking with students in secondary 4 and 5 who are convinced, from listening to politicians, that English will become an official language of Québec. And what did they use as an example? Well, they said - we were talking at that point about the Minister of Education and Public Security - we were talking about bilingual road signs and the students whose mother tongue is neither French nor English felt this was an ambiguous message. You have been approved as an immigrant by a community that is in majority English-speaking and you get a bilingual passport. To them, the message is one of bilingualism. And they ask the teachers to prove how French is important.

Better yet, in secondary 4 and 5, newcomers are convinced of the importance of French in Québec. These same newcomers can go to CEGEP in English and, God love us, can even get scholarships to be able to transfer into the English sector at CEGEP. These dual messages that our youngsters receive are harmful to even learning the official language of Québec.

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

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This brings up many questions. A clarification about the fundamental difference in the two charters: the Québec Charter provides for the protection of economic and social rights. To see that these rights are respected, according to the Canadian Charter, you must hire a lawyer to defend them, whereas in Québec, you have the Commission des droits de la personne. This is fundamental, this difference, this effect, this accessibility to the exercise of those rights.

Now, Mr. Chairman, generally, education falls under provincial jurisdiction. However, we know the effects of Section 93 of the Constitution and Section 23 of the Canadian Charter, which ultimately denies these rights. Today, we know that the French sector of the PSGBM has grown by a factor of 10 in the last decade, because of the confessional structures imposed

on us. We are aware of the saga that has continued under all governments since 1966 to try to establish unified school boards or language-based school boards.

Two short questions. What should be the constitutional guarantees for Anglophones of a Québec constitution in the area of schools? And could you tell us a little about what that would mean: four school boards under Bill 107... on the establishment of school boards on the island of Montreal? (4:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Grenon:** First, I hope that you have read pages 16 and 17 of our brief. It's edifying. I'm convinced that there is not a single person at this table who, after having read pages 16 and 17, is still convinced that the status quo must be kept, with the Québec-Canadian relations we have right now.

For us, the position is clear. Indeed, the Parent Commission was well ahead of us. In 1966, they called for unified school boards. We now, we are asking for and accepting the government's position, that of language-based school boards. That will affect at least 15 000 youngsters who are now in the Protestant sector. These youngsters are for the most part, I won't say all, but a large number of them are immersed in an Anglo-Saxon environment. And integration with the French culture, with Québec culture, well, they don't get that. It's too bad, but they don't. Such a phenomenon is deplorable in 1990. You know that there is also a school board involved in a dispute with a local government over confessional status. It's really unfortunate that in 1990, we can use public funds, for schools, to oppose a decision by the provincial government on the interpretation of Section 93 of the Canadian Constitution. So, since 1966, there should have been laws. In 1990...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Grenon...

**Mr. Grenon:** ...we're waiting for the Supreme Court decision to find out if we have the right to have language-based school boards in Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Grenon. That uses up this block of questions. We now turn to questions from the other members of the Commission. The first on my list is Mr. d'Anjou, followed by Mr. Libman and Mrs. Pagé.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to congratulate you on your brief, which I read with a great deal of interest and which corresponds to many of the positions that have been expressed here, before the Commission, on the same subjects. There is one point in particular on which I would like to hear your

views. Let's say, in passing, that Bill 107, as voted by the National Assembly, now recognizes the confessional school boards protected by the Canadian Constitution until a final decision determines exactly where we stand, legally speaking. But historically, the historic rights of the residents of Lower Canada, or of Québec if you will, were twofold, in my mind. There were, in fact, Anglophone and Francophone school boards because at that time, most of the Protestants were English-speaking. So the Protestant or dissident school boards were English and the Catholic school boards, for the Catholics, were French. There remains the case, obviously, of the Anglo-Catholics, through the Catholic school boards, that were majority French-speaking, which had English schools in the neighbourhoods where there were sufficient numbers, where there were agreements with the Protestant school boards.

Of the fundamental rights that the public school assumed, first was language. Then there was religion, because at that time, everyone was Christian. Clearly, there have been a lot of changes since then. There have been immigrants of all nationalities and different languages, different religions. Everyone, I think, or virtually everyone, is now in agreement with the principle of language-based school boards.

To resolve the question from a constitutional point of view, do you believe that a constitution, whether for Canada or Québec, should guarantee, first, the existence of language-based school boards for French and English in Québec? That's first. Second, should it guarantee historic religious rights? Because that's a part of our culture and values, and that also would satisfy most parents, I think. That is, the right for those who want it to receive religious instruction in school, whether Catholic or Protestant, and at the same time guarantee the right of others to be exempted or to have their freedom of mind respected. Do you think that a guarantee of that nature could avoid the multiplication or superposition of structures, in Montréal in particular, which I think is very harmful to the integration of immigrants and of people of different nationalities?

**Mr. Grenon:** Well, Mr. d'Anjou, you know Bill 107 so much better than I, you yourself say that it is harmful in Montréal for those people whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, and I would even say it is harmful for Québec as a whole. More and more often, people call themselves Catholic or Protestant but don't necessarily practice their religion. Why go at it backwards? You know as well as I do that school is a public, common institution. Recognizing that schools are public and common, now, people who want a... Schools - we are referring to school board structures - should be non-confessional, that's clear to us. Now, with Bill 107, parents

can have a school for their own religion. Does that mean that they have to have a religious administrative structure? We feel it should not even be considered. You talk about respect for others? Yes, respect for others is recognized. Will we be forced in Québec, before long, to have a protection system with religious affiliations? Why is it done with schools? Schools are social institutions. The whole community is entitled to be there, regardless of ethnic or religious origin. Currently, we are proceeding by exceptions, which is not healthy for the development of a people, a new people in Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. d'Anjou's time is up. Now Mr. Libman and then Mrs. Pagé.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In fact, my first question was exactly the same as Mr. Rémillard's, when I read on page 12 that the Québec Charter makes collective rights more important, I skipped the page. As Mr. Rémillard said, that it is completely inaccurate. You spoke about this line of equilibrium. I can tell you that such a line exists. This line is in Section 1 of our Canadian Charter, it is Section 9.1 of our Québec Charter. That is just to clarify that point. But my question, Mr. Chairman is, if we look at page 17, and I quote, "In 1990, the Anglophones, the Protestants and the Ultra-Catholics of Montréal continue to impede change by invoking the privileges conferred upon them by the BNA Act, a colonial law of the 19th century." This is the subject of serious debate, at this time, in the English-speaking community but most Québec Anglophones favour language-based school boards but if there was simply some protection, protection as Mr. d'Anjou pointed out. They would favour language-based school boards if there were simply some protection or guarantee for these school boards. So my question is simple and is as follows. How can you be against this guarantee, the education of our minorities, it is something... something that you should be proud of. You should be saying, yes, we must protect, we must provide guarantees. How can you be against these guarantees for the education of our minorities?

**Mr. Grenon:** Mr. Libman, I think that we said clearly that we are proud of our minorities, and I think that the Alliance is quite clear on expressing this publicly, in terms of reception, and we do a lot of work. What we are saying is this: It is not a matter of preferring the confessional structure at the expense of the newcomers. Is it honest to have a confessional structure when in our schools we sometimes have 10, 12 different religious communities? Is it reasonable, in a public school, to have a service that corresponds to a particular confession, and to impose it on the whole school? You know that

in the confessional schools, in some places, we take the liturgical calendar of the Catholic Church and we follow it throughout the entire school year. We think that is unacceptable and the acceptance of all the religious communities at school, without having to exclude anyone, is the formula that I think we should adopt. We should not proceed by exceptions.

**Mr. Libman:** I said that if we change our school boards for language-based ones — and I see from your brief that you favour that — if we change to linguistic school boards, are you in favour of a type of constitutional amendment like 93, that protects and guarantees language-based school boards?

**Mr. Grenon:** In Bill 107, this protection already exists. There is a possibility of having a model school in which we would have, and that doesn't mean that we are necessarily in agreement with everything in Bill 107, there are some major questions about it, but there is a possibility already there, without asking for exceptions for religious groups.

**Mr. Libman:** Let me go on to the next question. I assume that you are favourable to protection for language-based school boards, and a guarantee? One last question, Mr. Chairman, if I may...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Quickly, please.

**Mr. Libman:** On page 10, you speak of the French-speaking people outside Québec. You say that they "are, alas, destined to be anglicized." Don't you think that if Québec becomes sovereign, the assimilation of French-speaking people outside Québec would be inevitable. If Québec became sovereign, don't you think it would be much worse for French-speaking people outside Québec, if Québec were to dissociate from the rest of Canada? I'm speaking of relations, of the backlash. We saw the repercussions in the rest of Canada after the passage of Bill 178. Imagine the sovereignty of Québec. What would be the impact on Francophones outside Québec if Québec decided to become sovereign?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Quickly, Mr. Grenon. We're already out of time.

**Mr. Grenon:** Imagine what has happened to our colleagues in the Western provinces, in places where there were 50%, 55% Francophones. Today, I'll let you take the opportunity to work out the number of people who are still French-speaking in those provinces. You had a word from our French-speaking compatriots from outside Québec, who testified that the home of the French language and culture is Québec.



Inside and outside Canada, they depend on Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Pagé. Excuse me, Mr. Libman, but your time is up. Mrs. Pagé.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to tell you that a group that preceded you this afternoon, the Fédération des groupes ethniques, came to testify that it was not the confessional school boards that were the guarantors of their integration into Québec or of the protection of their fundamental rights. On the contrary. They saw in language-based school boards a promising path in this area. I would also like to point out that the testimony you give on page 11 and 12 always sparks emotion. But having been a teacher in Montréal and at one time, president of the Alliance, I know that these situations occur, that the teachers of Montréal face them with tremendous generosity and open-mindedness. But, in fact, there is a hidden side to this whole phenomenon of immigration and integration. I mean the cultural shock. And that works in both directions. The host community and the new communities have to live with the insecurity caused by cultural shock. And I think that you were right to bring up certain problems that occur and that must be faced collectively. My question is the following, and it is in the same vein as Mr. d'Anjou's. Mr. d'Anjou said to you: Language-based school boards with the guarantees for historic rights for Catholic and Protestants. I want you to tell me in what situation that puts the other religious groups in a multicultural and therefore multiconfessional Québec? I know that in Montréal, for example, more than twenty different religions are represented in some schools. How would these other groups see historic rights, those belonging to the Catholics and the Protestants, and the fact that they really have no role in this hierarchy? I would like your opinion on this aspect.

(4:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Grenon:** I think that we must not fall into the same rut with religion as with the acceptance of ethnic communities. It's not enough just to receive the ethnic communities. We have to accept them, but we must accept them the way they are. And when we say the way they are, that means with their religious differences. Putting them in a school commission that would force them into the straitjacket of a particular religion does not respect their integration into the school, which is, I repeat, public and common. Public, common schools all must satisfy all user needs, even religious needs. I can't see giving preference to a public, common school board, having rights and saying to other religious communities: If you want to come here, you come by exclusion. Exclusion for us has a

meaning, not of integration into, but of disintegration from the community.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Holden, followed by Mr. Turgeon, who will probably be the last speaker in this group. Mr. Holden.

**Mr. Holden:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Grenon, I am going to tell you a story that I always tell journalists. In the 1940s, we had a maid at home called Thérèse. I was the only member of the family who spoke French, and I was 17. One day, we were talking about religion, and so I said to her, "What do you think heaven is like, Thérèse?" She said, "Mr. Dick, in heaven your mother works for me and she speaks to me in French." That was when I knew that Bill 101 would come sooner or later.

**Voices:** Ha! Ha! Ha!

**Mr. Holden:** Since that time, French has spread incredibly in Québec among the English-speaking community. I hope that you will admit that the progress in French language and culture in Québec in the last 35 years has been phenomenal. And then you say: Francophones and Montrealers, the members of the Alliance are in a good position to witness the rapid changes in our society and to understand that our language and our culture are threatened. The English historian Arnold Toynbee said that if there were no nationalities left in the world, the last two to go would be the Chinese and the French Canadians. So, Mr. Grenon, don't you think that the threat you describe in your brief is exaggerated?

**Mr. Grenon:** First of all, we congratulate you for being the only one to speak French in your family, we are pleased to hear that. If everyone in your community did the same, I think there would already be a great deal of harmony. The example you give, the Chinese and the French Canadians, is proof that we have to fight. We are going to continue to fight. Don't forget that we're in an Anglo-Saxon sea, we're a minority on the American continent and, what's more, I don't think that asking for our autonomy here excludes the others. It can be done harmoniously and we need guarantees to continue our development especially with massive influxes of newcomers. These newcomers must know exactly who they are to integrate with. Is it to be the Anglophone community or the Franco-phone community? We think the answer is clear. And the only way is for the message not to be ambiguous. Right now it still is, and the fact that there are two governments involved at this level continues the ambiguity.

**Mr. Holden:** Just one more comment. I hope, Mr. Grenon, that Canada and Québec will never separate, but if it should come to that, I hope like hell that you're right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Turgeon:** I see that Mr. Holden has a sense of humour. It's a good thing for you that your maid's name wasn't Mary or you would never have known that Bill 101 was on its way...

**Voices:** Ha! Ha! Ha!

**Mr. Turgeon:** Having said that, Mr. Grenon, I am going to tell you that I am rather sensitive to the remarks and the perception that Minister Gil Rémillard mentioned just now, with respect to pages 11 and 12 of your text. Mr. Rémillard had to wonder if he didn't suddenly have a group of fascists before him who would try to drag us back decades. I think that Mrs. Pagé was quite right in shedding some light on this. If I understand you correctly, you simply wanted to show a situation in order to show how confusing things are with the existing dual jurisdiction. Having said that, current events give us a great deal to think about. And I would like to know what you think, for example, of the position of the confessional school movement, of Mr. Pallascio who as far as immigration is concerned, and we know how really important that is, proposes that it be only Judeo-Christian and French-speaking immigration. What is your reaction to that?

**A voice:** Bad.

**Mr. Grenon:** We react very badly, not just badly, very badly. And that is unfortunate. I hope that people have understood that the position of the Chairman of the Commission scolaire de Montréal does not reflect the position of the teachers. Indeed, there was an opportunity just now, with a rather large group from the Montréal ethnic community, to take a stand on this. We are making efforts as teachers, since Québec doesn't have full jurisdiction with regard to immigrants, we make substantial efforts to work with, create links with the communities, including the Jewish community, because it is a Judeo-Christian community. But when you listen to Mr. Pallascio, it seems that they don't belong to the Judeo-Christian community. So Judeo-Christian for him seems to be Catholic, observant Catholic.

Well that's unfortunate. And there you have another reason, ladies and gentlemen, to say that this legal battle has to cease on the question of school boards throughout Québec. It is abhorrent to continue like this. And speaking of fascism, it

is with such statements that fascism is born.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Larose, you had a brief comment?

**Mr. Larose:** I want to find out if there are, around the world, Judeo-Christian Francophones, besides in France, would we find them in the Moukrouk Islands.

**A voice:** Well, that's a little broad...

**Mr. Larose:** Mr. Chairman, I only wanted to say one thing. Sometimes there are people who make us feel ashamed. We all have our dinosaurs.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** So, on that note, I see that we've used up the time allotted for this presentation. I would just like to thank the Alliance des professeurs et professeurs de Montréal and the whole group, Mrs. Vachon, Mrs. Drouin, Mr. Egretaud and Mr. Grenon, for their presentation.

I will now ask you to leave the table quickly so that the next group can come in. Feel free to greet your friends as you leave, but if possible, not right in front of the table. Thank you again for coming.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:35 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:42 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Would the ladies and gentlemen of the Commission please take their seats?

**Voices:** ...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will now be welcoming, for a period that will end at 6:00 p.m., the Société québécoise de droit international.

**A voice:** 5:30.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** 5:30?

**A voice:** One hour.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Ah! One hour. Fine. That would mean 5:45 p.m., seeing what time it is now. Good! Until 5:45, Société québécoise de droit international. Mr. Daniel Desjardins, president, will introduce the group accompanying him, and then Mr. Daniel Turp, I think, will make a 10-minute presentation of their brief. Afterwards there will be question periods, as planned, I mean 10 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the government, 10 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition, 25 minutes for the members

who have registered with the Chair, none to exceed 5 minutes.

Mr. Desjardins, would you please introduce your group.

### **Société québécoise de droit international**

**Mr. Desjardins (Daniel):** Messrs. Chairmen, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, the Société québécoise de droit international is pleased to submit its brief to you. Our organization was founded in 1982 and its membership includes legal scholars, lawyers, and professors and students of the various faculties of law in Québec. As its name indicates, our organization is primarily interested in questions of public and private international law. Through its brief, our organization intends to provide you with a few thoughts on international law which, we hope, may be useful to you during your hearings.

Other than myself, the delegation from the Société québécoise de droit international includes the following individuals: Daniel Turp, secretary general, Vilay Soun Loungnarath, René Côté, Carol Hilling and William Schabas. Daniel Turp will present our organization's brief. Thank you.

**Mr. Turp (Daniel):** Messrs. Chairmen, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission. In order to guide your Commission's analysis, the Société québécoise de droit international has decided to discuss in its brief two fundamental questions concerning Québec's political and constitutional future, questions upon which international law may shed some light. First, the question of Quebecers' right to self-determination, and, second, the question of Québec's international jurisdiction. As you will have noticed when reading the brief, the Société québécoise de droit international is asking the Commission to affirm Québec's right to self-determination and to remember that the right of Quebecers to determine their political status and assure their economic, social and cultural development – and I am employing the terms used in the first paragraph of the preamble to the statute establishing your Commission – that this right is based on one of the most fundamental standards of contemporary international law. In our opinion, your Commission must consolidate the positions taken by the Parliament of Québec (sic) and the successive governments of Québec by means of such an affirmation. And, by doing so, it will base Québec's demands and its own recommendations on the standards of an international legal order which would legitimately, and I would add lawfully, allow it to make good its right of self-determination over the constraints of a Canadian constitutional legal order, in part the one imposed on it by the Constitution Act of 1982 without its consent.

The brief essentially deals with the question of Québec's international jurisdiction. We believe

your analysis of this question is becoming increasingly indispensable. More and more because of the recommendations which have been presented to you over the past week and which show a tendency towards a significant expansion of Québec's jurisdiction. If indeed Québec wishes to exercise exclusive, or even shared, jurisdiction over employment, immigration, education and culture, and also, as favoured by the Mouvement Desjardins, in particular, control its main economic levers, Québec must become involved in the activities of international organizations and conferences. Since 1945 especially, the latter have drafted treaties, codes of conduct, and guidelines, and have adopted many standards which have an increasingly significant impact on States' exercise of domestic jurisdiction and the activities of parliament, governments and courts.

Endless examples could be cited. Economic example: GATT is on the verge of adopting a service code, modifying the rules governing public markets. Cultural agencies and international organizations have long studied the rules of copyright, which is fundamentally important to the future of Quebecers and their cultural security. With respect to human rights, we have only to think of migrant workers' rights, and especially the rights of Native people which are being studied by international organizations, primarily the UN.

And today in 1990 we have the Gérin-Lajoie doctrine, which holds that Québec must extend its domestic jurisdiction at the international level. This doctrine is remarkably relevant today and, in our opinion, it is important for the Commission as it redefines Québec's political and constitutional status to determine how much international jurisdiction Québec should possess. In this regard, the Commission must ask itself if Québec must consider its capacity to enter into international agreements or treaties, and if it must claim recognition of this capacity in proper form.

In our opinion, the Commission must also study the extent of Québec's participation in other international Francophone institutions, for example, but also in universal and regional organizations such as the UN, the OAS, organizations involved in culture and human rights, UNESCO, the International Labour Organization, and even in organizations involved in technical or technological issues: the International Telecommunication Union, Intelsat, ICAO and so on. These questions primarily crop up on the assumption that the federal system is maintained. In this regard, it is very important to mention that international law, we must make ourselves clear on that, is highly adaptable to situations in which international jurisdiction is granted to the members of a federal state, as shown in Belgian, German and Swiss practices, the increasingly genuine exercise, I would say, of international jurisdiction by the Soviet federate republics and

other federate states in Eastern Europe.

Messrs. Chairmen, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, we have also dealt with the question of a sovereign Québec's international jurisdiction in our brief and have raised several issues which would be appropriate to examine in more detail during the question and discussion period.

To orient the discussion, we are taking the liberty of raising questions concerning not only the succession of a sovereign Québec State to the treaties of the Canadian State, but also to the property and debts of the Canadian State. We would also like to recommend that you study the issue of Québec's future delegation of authority to common institutions which would be created under economic integration treaties with Canada, with the North American states, and even with the European community, with which Québec could also consider becoming associated.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, the Société québécoise de droit international is also making Québec's best interests its main concern in this debate on Québec's political and constitutional future. It is especially proud to be associated with this exercise in self-determination on the part of Quebecers, for which your Commission is the preferred vehicle, and it hopes that its contribution, which is primarily scientific in nature, will prove useful and may serve as an inspiration for your debates.

It offers your Commission the expertise of the members of its delegation, who are now prepared to answer your questions. Daniel Desjardins is especially concerned with questions regarding State succession to... René Côté is concerned primarily with technological questions and the jurisdiction which Québec could obtain and exercise in international organizations; Carol Hilling is concerned with the question of State succession in the matter of a treaty; William Schabas can speak on peoples' right of self-determination and human rights questions, and Mr. Loungnarath specializes in questions regarding the free trade agreement.

Messrs. Chairmen, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** All right. We will begin this scientific discussion with members of the Barreau with questions from the party forming the Official Opposition. Mr. Jacques Brassard is first.

**Mr. Brassard:** Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to start by thanking you for coming before us to speak about international law, because I feel that this will become increasingly important as our work progresses, based on the fact that, if Quebecers, in exercising their right of self-determination, decide to choose sovereignty, it will become obvious that

the frame of reference will no longer be Canadian domestic law, with everything we know, such as negotiations between 11 governments and the amendment formula contained in the Constitution, but rather will be international law. I think we all agree on that.

My first question concerns peoples' right of self-determination. Everyone recognizes it, you even indicated it in the statute establishing this Commission, where it is referred to in the first paragraph. However, I would like to find out from you what would be the essential conditions which Quebecers must meet, respect, in order for this exercise of rights to be fully recognized and considered as entirely legitimate, even if, as regards domestic law, it could be considered illegal. There is a small problem here. The Charter of the United Nations recognizes peoples' right of self-determination, but in 1970, the declaration on friendly relations between States, while recognizing the peoples' right of self-determination, stipulated that no one could take actions which would dismember or dismantle existing member States of the United Nations. So, there was a sort of contradiction between the peoples' right of self-determination and this declaration of friendly relations between States.

What are the essential conditions which Quebecers should meet and respect for the international community to recognize the legitimacy of exercising this right?

**Mr. Desjardins:** I will turn your question over to Mr. Daniel Turp.

**Mr. Turp:** For my part, I will ask William Schabas to continue our analysis of that issue. You may freely quote the Charter of the United Nations and its interpretation given in a resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations. This was resolution 2625, adopted in 1970. And, while the Charter of the United Nations asserted the existence of peoples' right of self-determination in very general terms, the same United Nations declaration tended to restrain its scope and suggested that, in exercising this right, a people could not violate the territorial integrity of a State.

These are two standards which, however, are similar to the standards of one or two international treaties, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and... which do not limit the scope of peoples' right of self-determination, and do not make this exception. They are quoted in our brief. The first sections in both these covenants state: "All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of this right they freely determine their political status." And this is a right contained in a treaty to which the Canadian State is a party, and the Canadian State became a party to this treaty after obtaining the consent of the ten, of the nine other Canadian provinces. And we could

probably argue that Canada is bound by this treaty regulation and has recognized that Québec has the right of self-determination.

And these regulations, which are all in the Charter and the covenants, do not list the conditions which must be met, except that a group must be considered a people. This is why your work, your recommendations are important, which is to say that you are speaking of and you are recommending this right on behalf of the existence of the Québec people. And it is very important to assert the existence of this people so that we can benefit from the right of self-determination. Beyond that, we could perhaps suggest that this right must be democratically exercised. We stress the concept of "freely", and I think that an exercise of self-determination must involve either elections or a referendum, where the choice concerning the method of self-determination is made freely.

International law, beyond that, is somewhat laconic, and it is truly up to the people to take matters into their own hands.

**Mr. Brassard:** Thank you. That means, if I understand you correctly, that to be a distinct society is not enough. You must really be a people.

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

**Mr. Turp:** Listen, we have had this debate elsewhere, when one of the Meech Lake accords was being discussed, and we could have claimed that a distinct society meant a people, but it is always better to use the concept, the terminology employed and recognized by international law. The concept of distinct society does not exist in international law; the concept of a people is recognized and accepted.

**Mr. Brassard:** My second question, Mr. Chairman, concerns the succession of states. In 1983, 54 out of the 76 participating states signed the Vienna Convention on apportioning assets and debts between the predecessor State and the successor State in the case of succession, which could affect Québec if the latter decided to exercise its right of self-determination.

I would like to find out from you if Québec could, in such a case, rely on this convention to oversee the apportionment of the debts and assets between the federal government and the Québec government, even if Canada is not a signatory, because I believe that Canada did not want to sign that convention. Are you aware of, how would you say... Have you probed the heart and soul of Canada to find out why it refused to sign this convention? And, despite everything, could we rely on it after gaining sovereignty? . (5:00 p.m.)

**Mr. Desjardins:** To answer the first part of

your question, the Vienna Convention of 1983 was basically drawn up in order to codify the standards of international law which are applicable in matters of state succession.

**Mr. Brassard:** Existing.

**Mr. Desjardins:** And, moreover, it is interesting to note that the first task of the International Law Commission responsible for codifying and drafting the provisions of the Vienna Convention was to ask all participating states to table before the Commission secretariat all precedents concerning treaties. And the treaties of the last four centuries were tabled before the Commission. On the basis of these precedents, after analysing the standards and customs applicable in the many precedents, based on that, we were able to codify these customs. But these are customs which exist in international law on the basis of customary law.

Why Canada and other Western nations did not wish to be a party to the Vienna Convention of 1983 can be explained in a political context, as it was not really a denial of law or recognition of international law, of the international custom in this matter, but much more due to a political context - since the States of the Third World, at that time, wanted to include certain economic and political concepts with respect to the decolonization process in the Convention - and with respect to the process of newly independent states, born of the decolonization process. This entire debate had also taken place in the 1970s, within the context of the new international economic order, which had taken place at the United Nations and other forums, and it is within this context that Canada and other international countries, other major countries, refused to ratify the Vienna Convention. But this refusal to ratify does not strip the Convention of its meaning with respect to applicable customs, given that it codifies certain international standards and customs. Whether the Convention was ratified or not, these are customs.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Your time is up. We now turn to the other party. Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Chairman, I'd like to begin by thanking the ladies and gentlemen who have come to testify before us. This brief is very interesting. If I may, there is a subject which I would like to discuss right away. It concerns Québec's right of self-determination. You tell us that it would be a good thing if Québec were to choose to remain within the Canadian federation, that it would be good to mention Québec's right of self-determination. I confess that I'm a bit uncomfortable with your recommendation, because I see it this way: If we

put that in any document, whether it's a Québec constitution or anything else that means we think that we don't already have it. Or others outside Québec could believe that we don't have it. Whereas, in my opinion, my profound conviction as a lawyer is that we have this right and, if Quebecers decided democratically to assume their destiny through sovereignty or independence, there is no individual, there is no other people or nation that can prevent them.

International legality and legitimacy take precedence over domestic legality and we live in a free and democratic country. Consequently, it seems to me that Québec's right of self-determination is a right that is fundamentally born of our democracy as it stands. Therefore, I have the impression that, in claiming this right, it's a little like saying: Well, we don't have it now, but we would like to have it. But, in fact, a referendum of this type actually took place in 1980, and if ever there was explicit proof that we have this right of self-determination, and that this right is recognized by our other federal partners, the federal government and the other provinces, it is the fact that these people participated in this referendum here, which concerned Québec's constitutional future with regard to its possible sovereignty. Therefore, my question is this: Is it truly necessary to include this principle of Quebecers' right of self-determination in a constitution, regardless of the document, or wouldn't it be better to take it for granted, since it is, in fact, a given, according to our democratic principles?

**Mr. Desjardins:** Sir...

**Mr. Turp:** I will tell you this, Mr. Minister, our exact recommendation is for the Commission, in its report, to affirm Québec's right of self-determination and to say that it is on the basis of this right that it is making recommendations, either to maintain the federal system, to assume sovereignty or to perhaps propose a formula that falls somewhere in between. Therefore, it is in the essence of the recommendation that your Commission - here, in its plan, the preliminary part of its report - indicates that it is by virtue of this fundamental standard of simple law that this exercise took place and has led to recommendations and proposals to the National Assembly. However, I would suggest that it wouldn't be a bad idea to add a reference to a Québec constitution, whether it's for a federate state or a sovereign state. In the case of a federate state, what would be interesting would be for Québec to affirm and consolidate its right and this constitution would say that its choices are carved in stone and that it could, by virtue of this right, rethink its relationship with Canada, whose nature it would change. And if Québec were a sovereign state, and if it recognized its right of self-determination, it would

be doing as many other sovereign states have done in their own constitution. Most African states, in the preamble to their constitutions, have affirmed that they became independent by virtue of this right.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Obviously you are referring to States which had a colonial past which we do not have. I assume your comparison is not made in this regard.

**Mr. Turp:** Well, I...

**Mr. Rémillard:** I'll repeat myself, if I may, there is another question that I would like to ask you. Concerning Québec's international relations in the event that federalism is renewed. Do you believe that it is possible, while respecting the rules of international law, for a Québec, which is a member of a reformulated, rearranged federal system, to have international relations which would satisfy its needs, given its distinct character in both cultural and economic terms? You, yourself, referred earlier to the Paul Gérin-Lajoie doctrine which, as you mentioned, and I'm quoting you, has truly all its meaning if we accept a renewed federalism system. Do you believe that we could, from a legal standpoint, from an international law standpoint, come up with a model which could satisfy Québec's requirements?

**Mr. Turp:** My answer is yes, but it will be a hard fight. Because unitary federal states often believe that they must have a monopoly over foreign relations and it is always difficult for them to yield jurisdiction to federate states or regions, and they always wish to subject the exercise of international jurisdiction by federate states or regions to Canadian and foreign policy. We know very well that Québec has had much difficulty, still has much difficulty in implementing its international relations policy. As Minister of International Relations, you must have had some fairly interesting experiences in this regard. But theoretically, yes. And if this were to take place, and I think our organization indicated that in its brief, recognition of jurisdiction should, at the very least, be constitutionalized to avoid haggling and the federal state's desire to always monitor Québec's international relations.

**Mr. Rémillard:** If I may, since we're running out of time, you are right. As Minister of International Relations, I have been involved in difficult situations concerning relations between the two governments. But I have also been involved in others that are particularly interesting, including the Francophone Summit, in which the Prime Minister of Québec has played a role that is absolutely unparalleled in our history, and I believe that this was particularly appreciated

at all levels, both here in Québec and internationally. But could we refer to the Belgian example, which is in the process of becoming a federation if it isn't already, and which has a particularly interesting method of sharing international responsibilities between the Belgian State and the various communities? Could you give us a few more details about that?

**Mr. Turp:** This is an interesting example, because Belgian communities and regions do have some jurisdiction over foreign relations. And I think that we could say that what Belgium's French communities, the Walloons and the Flemings, have done is very much based on what Québec has done. They have set up departments of international relations, delegations, and you know that even the Belgian communities and regions have had a lot of difficulty with the central State in obtaining a common foreign relations policy. When the federal State says in the official newspaper, *Le Moniteur belge*, that the agreements concluded by the communities do not have the value of a treaty, to announce to the States that these are documents without a great deal of importance, we can once again recognize the difficulty for a State that is part of a quasi-federal State to gain acceptance for the idea that it has its own, independent international relations. If Québec...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Turp. Mr. Rémillard, I steered you wrong earlier; you were right, it wasn't your turn. I reversed the order, I'm sorry.

**Mr. Rémillard:** So may I have...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You may have 30 more seconds.

**Mr. Rémillard:** That's very kind. One last question, if I may. I wouldn't like to abuse the chair's indulgence. If Québec were to become sovereign, what would happen to a treaty, such as the free trade agreement? Would we have to start from scratch and renegotiate it, with no commitment from the United States of America?

**Mrs. Hilling (Carol):** If Québec were to become a sovereign State, the rules applicable to treaties would be based on the principle of continuation, as stated in the Vienna Convention on the succession of a State with regard to treaties. That's the basic principle. Now, obviously, given that the free trade agreement creates binational institutions and creates binational mechanisms to settle disputes, it is quite likely that negotiations would be needed to determine how these institutions would function if Québec continued to be a party...

**Mr. Rémillard:** But in plain language,

Madame, I would like to understand your answer. Say that Québec becomes sovereign tomorrow. The day after tomorrow, will the United States of America still consider that it has a free trade agreement with Québec after its sovereignty?

**Mrs. Hilling:** It is difficult to give a categorical answer, because I have no precedent that I can use as an example, on which I could base my answer. The basic principle, as I told you, is continuation. Therefore, in principle, Québec would succeed to the treaty. Now, as I told you, this is a bilateral treaty, a treaty which is personal, which was entered into between the United States and Canada, and it is possible that negotiations would be necessary. It is possible that the United States would demand that negotiations take place to find out what Québec's status will be.  
(5:15 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** That was a little longer than 30 seconds, but if I... given the time...

**Mr. Loungnarath:** It's an important question, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Loungnarath:** So, may I speak?

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

**Mr. Loungnarath:** You're sure?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Yes, I'm absolutely sure. Not for very long, but you may go ahead.

**Mr. Loungnarath:** Yes, I'm of the same opinion as Mrs. Hilling. In fact, the rule of law is found in article 34 of the Convention, which is on page 16 of the brief. The principle is continuation. There is one exception, and free trade comes into it. The free trade situation is not clear. But it could be included in this exception. Everything depends on how we interpret the end of article 34, paragraph B subparagraph 2: "...serait incompatible avec l'objet et le but du traité ou changerait radicalement les conditions d'exécution du traité."

Therefore, I think we must differentiate between the rules of substantive law which are set by the treaty, and the institutions which were established to administer the treaty. I think that, as regards the rules of substantive law, there can be no second thoughts. Québec was in agreement with free trade; it clearly demonstrated that in the last election. There probably wouldn't have been free trade if Québec hadn't supported this issue.

So, to come to us afterwards and say: Ah! It would seem the Americans are having second thoughts. That's the first part of the answer. So, we must differentiate between the rules of substantive law and the question of mechanisms to administer the free trade area. And this brings us to another question: Are the mechanisms, or the institutions, or the committees which were created to administer the free trade area, truly essential, truly fundamental and incontrovertible elements? Elements which, if modified, would radically change the terms for executing the treaty? I don't think so. That's the first part of my answer.

The second part of my answer is that we must also distinguish the legal aspect of the question — and that's what we are going to examine — from the question of political dynamics. It isn't certain whether the Americans would show bad faith and be petty. The Americans are not emotionally involved in the question of Québec's sovereignty as English Canada is. I spent last year on the western coast of the United States, where I was studying. I can tell you that Americans show a lot of sympathy for the sovereignty cause and for the cause, or let's call it more neutrally, with more neutrality, the question of Québec's emancipation or affirmation. And it isn't obvious that there would necessarily be hostility in American political circles with respect to the free trade issue. Especially if we look at it in conjunction with the entire question of electricity exports, which seems to fire up your government.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I would like to inform...

**Mr. Loungnarath:** I'm through...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ...the Barreau delegate, that the chair finds himself to be blatantly out of order, by virtue of his own rules.

So, we will now turn, if I may, to Mr. Béland, which will not prevent us from continuing in the same vein if necessary. Mr. Béland.

**Mr. Béland:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I must tell you that this Commission had planned to hear experts a little later on. I think that, thanks to your generous contribution, we are already enjoying the privilege of hearing experts. And I want to thank you because I think that international law is truly a specialty and I think that you are championing it very well.

Earlier, you stressed that the exercise of the right of self-determination was conditional on whether a group is a people or whether a group is recognized as a people. Is there a recognized definition of the term "people" in

international law? Because I think that word is used indiscriminately. Is there a definition in international law? That's my first question.

The second is that, since international law or the right of self-determination always conflicts somewhat with domestic law, if there are those who define international law, or its execution or protection by saying: Well, it depends on the number of countries with which a country has friendly relations. In your opinion, if domestic law takes precedence over international law, who would sanction the right of self-determination? How would that come to pass? If you have an example to give me, I would very much like to hear it.

**Mr. Desjardins:** Mr. Béland, I will ask Mr. Bill Schabas to answer your question.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you.

**Mr. Schabas:** As regards the existence of a definition of the word "people", our brief referred to international covenants, especially the international covenant concerning civil and political rights, in which peoples' right of self-determination was recognized.

In order to interpret it, we can refer to the preparatory works for the international covenant. In these works, the problem was to decide whether the right of self-determination applied only to colonies, for example, or if it would also be relevant to Western countries, as in Europe. The Soviet Union was particularly interested in the question. The debates took place during the 1950s, but the Soviet Union's current interest in this question is obvious. I think that we can establish a main criterion for the definition of a people: it involves finding a certain balance in a country between groups or peoples, national groups, nations or peoples. That is, we try to exclude the possibility of a country in which there is a majority, a people in majority, and ethnic or national minorities. There must be a certain balance, an equal footing between these groups. This is obviously a question on which, perhaps, no court will render a decision. But it seems to me that Québec and Canada correspond to this situation.

Second, it involves trying to find recognition in the Constitution, something that we don't always find, but we try in this type of situation to find some sort of recognition in the very Constitution of a country of these groups, or of these nations or of these peoples. Once again, we earlier asked the question regarding a distinct society. This will be a highly interesting argument to explain, to justify recognition even if we do not use the word "people" in such a document. At least, it's recognition of the existence of a national entity which is almost a people. With respect to the definition... I think that you had another question but I...



**Mr. Bélard:** The sanction, yes, how the lack of respect for the right of self-determination is sanctioned.

**Mr. Turp:** Listen, there's something your Commission might be able to do. It has constitutional experts. I think that what Mr. Rémillard said earlier, the fact that the 1980 referendum consecrated the existence of peoples' right of self-determination, could perhaps help us affirm that there exists even now a constitutional convention - in Canadian constitutional law - by virtue of which Québec has the right to self-determination and the right to choose the type of self-determination, either within the federation, or with a sovereignty, or with a formula in between. And if such is the case, there is no conflict between international law and domestic law. Canadian constitutional law recognizes the right of self-determination, international law recognizes the right of self-determination. From a legal standpoint, there is no conflict. From a political standpoint, is there a conflict? There may be a conflict, but I think that the democratic legitimacy of the referendum vote, which clearly showed a majority in favour of a solution, will prevent the invocation of the rules of law to prevent a people from self-determination. If ever the federal State said that it's illegal, referred the matter to its courts, we could appeal to the other states to decide on the legality of Québec's action, whether it be a declaration of sovereignty or any other declaration. But there is no mechanism by which Québec currently could refer the matter to an international court of law.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Ouellet now has the floor, and will be followed by Mr. Nicolet and Mr. Poitras.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Ladies, gentlemen, thank you for this brief and especially for the highly relevant questions that you have submitted to us. I think that it will be very useful for the members of our Commission to try to answer some of the questions which you have presented today. One particular part of your brief which drew my attention and that was when you were speaking about the uncertain and precarious status, in both political and legal terms, of Québec's delegations abroad. Why do you call it uncertain and precarious? It seems to me that this status is determined by the foreign government and the applicable laws. Nothing will make me believe that the governments of countries which accepted Québec delegations are likely to have second thoughts. And moreover, I think that the request to open Québec delegations over the last 30 years has always been countenanced by the Government of Canada. Are there new factors, are there elements which lead you to believe that this issue is unclear and uncertain?

**Mr. Turp:** Why is the status uncertain and precarious? Uncertain first, because there are no two Québec delegations abroad whose status is alike. Some delegations have a quasi-diplomatic, quasi-consular status, delegation members have privileges and immunities, while others do not, and there is no document which... Rarely. There are documents; with France, an agreement was reached with General de Gaulle and the government of the day, but there are few documents which govern the status of Québec delegations. Therefore, it is uncertain in that regard. Precarious, because it requires the authorization of the federal government. And the federal government, contrary to what you suggest, has not always wanted Québec to open foreign delegations. Remember Claude Morin's view of this issue in *L'art de l'impossible*, the saga of opening a Québec delegation in Africa. And there again, Québec has no delegation in French-speaking Africa, when it should have had one long ago. And, in my opinion, the question comes up also because of the importance of international organizations, because of Québec's opportunity to have delegates in international organizations. I would like to see the federal government agree to let Québec have delegates in UNESCO, or to another international organization. It's because of that that it is precarious, because it is subject to federal authorization which is not forthcoming, always because of the idea that it has a monopoly over foreign relations, and that this monopoly must not be eroded.

**Mr. Ouellet:** You are quoting Mr. Morin. The least you can say about him is that he is not the most impartial observer in this area. In any event...

**Mr. Turp:** Yes. His book, *L'art de l'impossible*, is an extremely meticulous work, and really...

**Mr. Ouellet:** In any event, I can...

**Mr. Turp:** ...I can tell you as a professor of international law, I quote this work to my students, because it is extremely meticulous. Regardless of Mr. Morin's political inclinations, he conducted an extremely rigorous scientific analysis of Québec's international relations and policy, and its links with Canada. I recommend that you read this work.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Perhaps certain Canadian diplomats from the province of Québec who have worked abroad should be asked to write books also and to tell the other side of the story. Then, you would be able to show your students both sides.

I would like to draw your attention to a dispatch from today's *Le Soleil* which caught my

eye, and to hear your comments. It's entitled "Mulroney fera le point à Paris avec Rocard sur la crise constitutionnelle" (Mulroney to discuss the constitutional crisis with Rocard in Paris). And this article says: "Should Québec ask for France's support in a unilateral declaration of sovereignty, for example, Ottawa could very well take refuge behind the position of the 12, with which France would be associated, because in European diplomatic circles, it has already been rumoured that the heads of state and government, including the President of France, must take into account the position of the 12 in their foreign policy declarations" (translation). What do you think of this...

**Mr. Desjardins:** Well, if you just look at the recent events in Eastern Europe, we have seen the 12 recognizing Lithuania's declarations of independence; therefore, politically, the 12 have by this very fact recognized as such the peoples' right of self-determination, as long as this choice is democratic. If the gouvernement du Québec and the population exercised this option, and made this choice democratically, we don't know what the position of the 12 would be, but on the basis of precedents again, why recognize Lithuania and not Québec? Your answer is as good as mine.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Nicolet has the floor. Unfortunately, your time is up.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Nicolet, followed by Mr. Poissant and Mr. Larose. (5:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask you to tell us more about this distinction between population and people, because it seems to me that, on an international basis especially, I'm thinking of India where there is an entire social dynamic which would make resorting to this right of self-determination more attractive than would seem the case. At the same time, I would like to discuss something that is much closer to home. Could Native populations, in certain circumstances, be considered a people?

**Mr. Schabas:** Earlier, I spoke about objective criteria in establishing the right of self-determination, but there is also a subjective aspect, that is, before being considered and demanding the rights of a people, you must be considered as a people. It involves exercising a right, but first, the people themselves must define themselves as a people and develop - I have the impression that that's what you are in the midst of doing here, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission - which aspects of sovereignty

or the right of self-determination it plans to exercise, because the covenant which was quoted to you in our brief spoke of economic, social and cultural development. This could have several facets. They must be determined. But, initially, it involves, as we said - you asked the question concerning Native peoples - defining yourselves as a people and making demands.

I will say that all peoples must take this step, which will obviously lead to the legal debate on exercising the right or on the existence of the right.

**Mr. Turp:** It's good to have several peoples in one territory. We must not say, just because the Québec people exists, that there aren't any Native peoples. They can coexist, live together on the same territory. I hope that the Native peoples, the numerous Native nations, as the National Assembly said in its resolution, that they state that they are nations, peoples, that they make demands and that the governments, the other peoples who live on the same territory, accommodate them, live together. And, let us not deny others the right of self-determination, on behalf of our right, which belongs to our people, of self-determination.

**Mr. Nicolet:** If there's a will.

**Mr. Turp:** If there's a will. Because, we have often been told that the criterion that Mr. Schabas calls for in preparatory works, often we are told that the only true criterion is the will to live together, the collective will to live. If this collective will to live exists, you can be considered as a people.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Poissant, followed by Mr. Larose. Mr. Poissant.

**Mr. Poissant:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to ask the Chairman if it would be possible to have copies of both conventions. You said that we might be able to have them.

Now, I have a series of questions. I will try to make them as short as possible. As regards self-determination, let's say we start with a referendum, are we talking about a simple majority of citizens who decide to secede?

**Mr. Desjardins:** To answer your question, both conventions were given to the secretariat of the Commission a few weeks ago. They are available. You will be able to obtain copies from the secretariat.

**Mr. Poissant:** O.K. That's fine. Thank you.

**Mr. Desjardins:** For the second question, is...

**Mr. Poissant:** Yes.

**Mr. Turp:** No, international law does not provide for the terms of exercising the right of peoples, whether it must be done by means of an election, a referendum or any other way.

Sometimes, national constitutions provide for it. The Soviet constitution, we recently heard, provides for a right of secession. You know that the Soviet Constitution says that federate republics have the right of secession and that a recent law was adopted which said that a sizeable majority was needed, which the Baltic States contested because they found that a bit excessive.

International law says nothing...

**Mr. Poissant:** What percentage?

**Mr. Turp:** ...but I think that must be interpreted freely as meaning that the majority of the population must have approved it. It doesn't say that this must be done by referendum or by election. It doesn't say whether a government can decide whether it has enough legitimacy through the electoral process to declare sovereignty, to subsequently negotiate it or negotiate its successional aspects, of succession to treaties, and then make a definitive declaration of sovereignty. The people who want to exercise their right of self-determination have a lot of freedom and a margin of appreciation.

**Mr. Poissant:** In short, we could decide that all we need is a simple majority, that's what you're telling me. That answers the question.

**Mr. Turp:** I think that that's the maximum required, 50% of the population plus one vote.

**Mr. Poissant:** There, that's a simple majority. Thank you. Is there currently a case in the world which is similar to Canada's, I don't want a lot of examples, we should perhaps...in modern times, because it would be interesting to find out how it has been done and how we could do it?

**Mr. Desjardins:** Listen, numerous parallels could be drawn between many of the most recent cases in modern times, if we examine them in light of the two Conventions, namely, the Vienna Convention on the succession to treaties or the Vienna Convention on debts, and the rest, and these aren't the only parallels, I repeat, in the entire process, for example, of decolonization, although the criteria for that are different; many parallels from the point of view of the mechanics themselves, from treaty negotiation, from debt negotiation, from sharing assets - there are precedents - exist. They are not all uniformly applicable, since some political and economic considerations must be taken into

account in each case, but there is still a certain precedent in modern practice which has been recorded and which is catalogued.

**Mr. Poissant:** Could you give us an example?

**Mr. Turp:** I'm sorry. I'll give you three or four of the most relevant examples. These are the secession of Senegal from the Mali Federation, the secession of Singapore from the Federation of Malaysia, which took place in the early 1960s, and I think that your Commission... I think that we would learn a lot and we would appreciate it if your Commission took such a step, and studied what is taking place in the Baltic republics. That's a federation.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** A trip to Malaysia and the Baltic nations. Unfortunately, we don't have the time.

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

**Mr. Turp:** Listen, speaking as a lawyer, a rogatory commission from your Commission could perhaps go to those States.

**Mr. Poissant:** I think that that answers my question. You seem to indicate that it would be preferable to secede and negotiate afterwards rather than to do it before. Up until 4:30 p.m. this afternoon, I had a different opinion. There's the question: Suppose that you are our legal representatives and that we have seceded and that, tomorrow, Ottawa has a panel of legal scholars as important as you who say: No, that doesn't work, and we begin legal debates. You know there are treaties which will tell you, that it is these international treaties, or at least international legal scholars, who will decide in the end. But what happens in the meantime?

**Mr. Turp:** A highly theoretical question, but what I'm telling you...

**Mr. Poissant:** But practical.

**Mr. Turp:** I don't know. I'm rather convinced that the legitimacy of the process would ensure that no one would argue its legality. If the process is carried out by referendum, with everyone being able to express their opinions, to vote yes or no, I don't see what government could legitimately oppose it. If one did oppose it, well, I think that Québec is very willing to negotiate and to give legal opinions to anyone who asks. We wanted to tell you this afternoon that there is an extraordinary new generation in international law, to take over from Morin, Patry, Dufour and others, there are young people who are interested in international law and who are able to provide you with excellent

opinions.

**Mr. Poissant:** If they are any younger than you, they must be very young indeed!

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

**A voice:** They're at the back, they're all students.

**Mr. Poissant:** Oh good! You've just attended an excellent class.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Your time is up, Mr. Poissant.

**Mr. Poissant:** No, Mr. Chairman. One last question, please? No?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Oh, well! At this time of day, we tend to be lenient.

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

**Mr. Poissant:** This being said, I think there will be a number of things to negotiate all the same because there are powers which we will want to keep. I suppose, for example, that there will be a common currency. And I don't think that the federal government would simply deny our action of self-determination, but perhaps it wouldn't be the federal government but the other provinces who would come and say: We don't accept this so easily. There are treaties, but they are fairly recent. I imagine that there wasn't a lot of jurisprudence which applied in these treaties, they are too recent.

So, my problem and question is this: If there were opposition, not simply to self-determination, I think that they would accept it, but to the negotiation which would come after, who will decide, then there would be a legal fight, with six lawyers from your side, and six lawyers from the other side, and it would never end, right?

**A voice:** Plus the fees!

**Mr. Poissant:** I don't even want to talk about that!

**Mr. Desjardins:** There are two aspects to your question. Other than the purely political aspect, on which obviously we cannot express an opinion, there is the legal aspect, negotiations must obviously be conducted. The parties will negotiate but, in the meantime, life goes on. And, in this regard, the reality of the situation is that cheques must be issued, temporary arrangements must be made so that the economic wheels continue to turn, be it at the economic level or otherwise...

**Mr. Poissant:** You would go so far as to say that the international financial community wouldn't see ambiguities, wouldn't see uncertainty, wouldn't see... would accept things as they are today?

**Mr. Desjardins:** As regards international finance...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I think you are getting on to another topic, Mr. Poissant...

**Mr. Poissant:** I'll get back to the topic, thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We have already strayed off topic. Mr. Larose, I announced you. You have already ended both previous sessions. Now you are going to tell me: Everything comes in threes. May I ask you: Everything comes in threes, but briefly?

**Mr. Larose:** Yes, it's about the Native nations. If I'm not mistaken, the ultimate authority remains the Canadian Confederation, it's Canada who is trustee of the status of Indians. How exactly will that work should Québec gain sovereignty? And, is it possible to enshrine in a Québec constitution a mechanism which would enable us to initiate credible negotiation to solve the various questions raised by Native people?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ...need pauses, or there won't be any time left for you to answer.

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

**Mr. Turp:** O.K. I think that we can, and above all must, enshrine recognition in a Québec constitution, even if it is necessary, if Native people demand it, of their right of self-determination. I think that we must also rewrite history, somewhat usually a little bit of law, but especially politics, especially with the generosity of the State and its programs. Because Native peoples' right of self-determination, they cannot exercise it as they could a few centuries ago. Either they are no longer Native people, or there are no longer as many. The population has been replaced on this territory. We are here, of French, English and other origins, to occupy a territory - which they largely occupied before us - and we have a responsibility to rewrite history a little, if not a lot, especially with the Native people who, like us, want to have the right of self-determination.

**Mr. Larose:** But will there be a transfer of the trustee aspect from the federal government to Québec?

**Mr. Turp:** Yes. Sovereignty, if we have sovereignty, jurisdiction over the territory of Québec, the people who live there, including Native people, will be entirely transferred to the successor government, that is, Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I thank these ladies and gentlemen from the Société québécoise de droit international, Mr. Côté, Mrs. Hilling, Mr. Turp, Mr. Loungnarath, Mr. Schabas and Mr. Desjardins, for this very pleasant consultation with the Commission this afternoon. I remind you that the proceedings are adjourned and will resume at 7:00 p.m. Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 5:44 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:10 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** So, ladies and gentlemen, the Commission is resuming its work with a presentation by the Forum pour l'emploi this evening. This presentation will last one and a half hours, which means that the speaking time is 10 minutes for the group presenting its brief, 15 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the government, 15 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition, 40 minutes for the members registered with the chair, with each member having 10 minutes. Mr. Corbo, if you would introduce the group and then tell us who will give us a 10-minute presentation of the brief.

#### Forum pour l'emploi

**Mr. Corbo (Claude):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me, starting from my left, Diane Bellemare, economist at the Université du Québec à Montréal and adviser to the Forum, Lise Poulin Simon, economist at Université Laval and adviser to the Forum, Michel Payette, secretary general of the Forum pour l'emploi, Raymonde Folco, president of the Conseil des communautés culturelles et de l'immigration du Québec and member of the sponsoring committee of the Forum pour l'emploi, and Clément Joly, first vice-president elect of the Chambre de commerce du Québec and member of the sponsoring committee of the Forum pour l'emploi. And, Mr. Chairman, I will be presenting the brief of the sponsoring committee of the Forum pour l'emploi.

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

**Mr. Corbo:** Mr. Chairman, I'd like to begin with a word or two about the Forum pour l'emploi, to make sure people understand the thrust and scope of the brief. As you know, the

Forum pour l'emploi isn't a political party, it isn't an employer group, it isn't a union, or an ideological group. On the contrary, it's a group that's exceptionally representative of the lifeblood of Québec society; the employer community, the labour community, the municipal and regional community, the education community, social groups, the cooperative movement. The Forum pour l'emploi brings together representatives of the major social groups in Québec whose concern, priority, and I'd even say passion, is to make the promotion of employment a central and essential element in any blueprint of Québec society.

The Forum's appearance before this Commission is solely based on its employment development objectives and the results of the regional forums and the Forum national pour l'emploi held in 1989, in which over 3,000 people participated, representing every socioeconomic sector and region of Québec.

Members of the sponsoring committee of the Forum pour l'emploi and all those from every sector of Québec who took part in the various forums have emphasized, in their work, first of all, the confusion, duplication, incoherence and inefficiency that result from the many interventions of the two levels of government in the area of manpower and employment development, and have pointed to the lack of coordination and harmonization of various government measures as one of the main obstacles to the implementation of active and effective employment and manpower development strategies, both at the local and regional levels. They have noted that inter-governmental competition and the duplication of public administrations often generate needlessly high administrative costs and planning problems for the two governments that are heightened by the difficulty observed in signing agreements between Québec and the federal government. And this causes inconsistency and confusion both for administrations and client groups.

Considering, then, that a significant part of Québec's existing employment problems is due to this situation of confusion, duplication, incoherence and inefficiency, the committee has identified six areas where it feels Québec should concentrate its action and assume its responsibilities. First, occupational training. The sponsoring committee of the Forum pour l'emploi believes that the various administrative agreements between the gouvernement du Québec and the federal government do not have the permanence required to formulate an effective occupational training policy, and prevent Québec from shaping this policy in accordance with its own needs. That's why the committee believes Québec must fully exercise its jurisdiction in this area and obtain the federal government's commitment to withdraw completely from this area and turn over to it all the funds allocated to Québec in this regard.

Second, job placement and creation. The committee is of the view that Québec must set up a single agency for job placement, entry into the job market and assistance for job creation, and must decentralize program administration at the regional level in Québec to adapt these programs to the needs of businesses and individuals in each region. That's why the committee says that Québec must fully exercise its jurisdiction in the area of job placement and support for entry into the job market as well as job creation, excluding any federal intervention in these areas.

Third, unemployment insurance. From the standpoint of improving occupational training planning and setting up a single-window structure in the regions of Québec, the committee feels it is essential, first, under the existing constitutional framework, to recover control over and responsibility for administration of the various employment, manpower development and income security services, as well as all programs that can be funded from the unemployment insurance fund within Québec. And, continuing with unemployment insurance, from the standpoint of a more general revision of the Constitution, the committee recommends and believes it is essential that Québec repatriate fully its constitutional jurisdiction over the unemployment insurance system, assumed by the federal government in 1940, in order to be fully autonomous in the entire labour market and income security sector.

Fourth, immigration. In the current situation, the committee believes it is necessary that Québec fully exercise its powers over the selection, reception, establishment and integration of immigrants. Since the administrative agreements in this area lack the permanence needed to establish a long-term employment policy in Québec, the committee feels the *gouvernement du Québec* should, in anticipation of a broader constitutional revision, repatriate full jurisdiction in the area of immigration.

Fifth, local and regional development. To effectively coordinate all efforts and stimulate job development in every region of Québec, the committee believes: first, that the *gouvernement du Québec* should have responsibility and exclusive jurisdiction over Québec's local and regional development policy; second, that the aims and implementation of this policy must be entrusted to the local and regional level; and third, that any outside structuring intervention must be subject to the priorities and responsibilities established under this policy.

The sixth item is macroeconomic policy. The committee believes there is an urgent need for a significant reform of the decision-making structures and mechanisms concerning the major objectives of Canada's fiscal, trade and monetary policy, and that such a reform should allow Québec enough room to enable it to shape its

policies based on the priorities and needs of its economy with regard to employment development. Failing such a reform, Québec should appropriate the tools necessary for it to define its own macroeconomic strategies, paying particular attention to the situation of employment and the labour market in Québec.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, the sponsoring committee believes that promotion of employment must be at the very heart of Québec's blueprint for society. Second, the committee believes that the new political and constitutional order sought by Québec society should facilitate, in a decisive way, the development of employment and, third, that the *gouvernement du Québec* must have all the constitutional powers necessary for the development of employment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Corbo. We will now proceed with the question period. We will begin with the group of non-elected members. Then, representatives of the party forming the government, and finally representatives of the party forming the Official Opposition.

The first person registered is Mr. Dufour.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank Mr. Corbo and his group for the presentation of their brief. I must say that, essentially, I'm in complete agreement with the brief. Basically, six themes have been raised. Occupational training. We'll also be telling you, in our brief tomorrow, that everything under the heading of occupational training program, manpower adjustment program, must become a priority for Québec, and the other provinces as well. Because, clearly, the problems in Western Canada aren't the same as in Québec, and complete repatriation is needed in that area.

The second part of your presentation: job placement, entry into the labour market, assistance for job creation, of course, because it's a spin-off of occupational training. I'm not going to discuss unemployment insurance, since there I don't agree with you. I also think we agree on immigration, subject to seeing what could be left to the federal government in that area. Local and regional development obviously as part of a manpower policy too. As for macroeconomic policy, I note what was also stated in the brief of the *Chambre de commerce*, and Mr. Joly was there to discuss it, that as far as monetary policy is concerned, the provinces must have a greater say, and perhaps some of the problems we are experiencing today could have been avoided.

This brings me to part three, my bone of contention, which is unemployment insurance. You make two proposals, the first being that, under the existing constitutional framework, the

control and responsibility for administration of various services relating to employment or manpower development and income security should be repatriated. Up to that point, we're talking about occupational training, manpower adjustment measures, etc. As a corollary to what was said a few moments ago, we have to agree. Where we part company – and of all the programs that can be funded out of the unemployment insurance system within Québec... Perhaps I've misunderstood you, Mr. Corbo. I remember you made an aside while presenting this section earlier.

What we say is that there are sections of the unemployment insurance system that can be repatriated immediately. That would include parental leave, since the provinces are already entitled to opt out in that area. And to have a consistent family policy – we discussed that a bit last night – there is no objection to repatriating the "parental leave" section. Especially since – and we're all aware of this – the federal government is no longer contributing to the unemployment insurance fund, which means that workers and employers are paying for it.

The problem I have is when you repatriate unemployment insurance as such. I'd just like to quote an official document from the ministère de la Main-d'œuvre, de la Sécurité du revenu et de la Formation professionnelle du Québec, which was tabled in the standing committee on employment, perhaps two or three weeks ago. The document says that Quebecers have directly or indirectly contributed \$3 billion to the system and are responsible for expenditures of \$4 billion. The result is a net gain for Québec of roughly \$1 billion for 1989.

Naturally, when you tell me you want to repatriate this, I have a problem because it means increasing business expenditures by \$1 billion. Especially since the federal government's withdrawal alone caused employees' contributions to rise by 3% and those of employers by roughly 4%. So, in the difficult times with which Mr. Joly is well acquainted, I have trouble agreeing with your proposal and I would like you to tell us how this additional billion would be financed?

**Mr. Corbo:** With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I'll ask Mrs. Poulin Simon to reply.

**Mrs. Poulin Simon (Lise):** I'm very pleased to speak before this Commission and discuss the issue of unemployment insurance with Mr. Dufour.

I think the Forum pour l'emploi has taken a two-tier approach, that is, first, assuming, of course, that there is no constitutional change, what we're asking overall is that the gouvernement du Québec be chiefly responsible for what I would call labour market, rather than just manpower, policy in Québec. Secondly, however, we say that if there is to be constitutional

reform, it would be advisable for Québec to control all unemployment insurance funds. And I would like to shift that to a somewhat different outlook, perhaps, than what we have now.

Currently, unemployment insurance in Canada is used almost exclusively, 85%, for income support purposes – in other words income security – with barely 15% used for so-called active labour market measures. What the Commission's Forum's brief proposes is the development of an active employment policy that would be one of the pillars of Québec's employment policy. And in that sense, I think it is very important to understand that unemployment insurance becomes employment insurance, somewhat in the same vein as the Grandpré report proposed. It becomes an employment insurance program and what it does, this employment insurance program, is that it intervenes not just in terms of manpower adjustment, but also in terms of employed manpower, not just the unemployed. It's a policy that applies both to employed and unemployed workers, which isn't presently the case. Such a scenario requires a great deal of coherence and cohesion between employment policies and income security policies. For instance, people currently on social aid but who are fit for work, and thus unemployed in a labour market sense, would have to be grouped in the same category, I'd say, as people on unemployment insurance.

Having said that, we say that if there were an active employment policy, obviously, in the current situation, there's an additional \$1 billion that goes to Québec. We were aware of that. But if there were an active employment policy, we can construe that such a use of those funds would probably result in some reduction in unemployment, and here I would like to quote figures. We know that a 1% reduction in unemployment results in an increase in the GDP of \$3 billion in Québec. So that the \$1 billion that might be lost by repatriating unemployment insurance, should that ever become Québec's position, because that isn't the position of the Forum as a whole, in other words, there is a two-tier position, that could make the loss of \$1 billion relative in the short term, I'd say, in the changeover of the system.

**Mr. Dufour:** You'll agree with me that that's purely hypothetical. I mean, our unemployment rate is climbing now. The sole hypothesis isn't necessarily that because we repatriate the programs, we automatically create more jobs in the very short term. I agree with you completely when you say that we have an unemployment insurance system based on a cheque on Friday rather than on recycling people, training them for new technological change. I'm totally in agreement with you. But I want to make sure I understand you. In the existing federal context,

the Forum doesn't demand the unemployment insurance system, with the possible exception of the parental aspect we mentioned earlier. In other words, you're not talking about asking the federal government to collect money from employees and employers and have Québec issue a cheque. This is not what you're referring to. So, when you say in the existing constitutional framework, hence in the existing federal system, the repatriation of the unemployment insurance fund, you're setting that aside.

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** There's still a nuance there. It's not the unemployment insurance fund we want to repatriate, even in the current situation, but rather management of unemployment insurance funds within Québec, with the result that the unemployment insurance fund retains its pan-Canadian character. But the management and organization, the choice of programs funded by the unemployment insurance system, would be up to the province and the institutions it sets up. Perhaps I didn't sufficiently stress that in the case of an active labour market policy, if it is to be effective, and I think, Mr. Dufour, you would agree with me that we could be effective with between \$5 billion and \$6 billion, and perhaps lower unemployment by 1% if we made the best possible use of that money, for instance for manpower adjustment in the manufacturing sector which everyone has been talking about for 30 years. (7:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Dufour:** The only thing I would ask, Mr. Chairman, is that we not request, in today's economic context, that workers and employers add another \$1 billion to their current contributions. I think it would be difficult to request that at present.

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** I'd ask just one question. How large is the fund transfer... that is, the money the federal government paid from the account... from the Treasury. How much money was transferred to small and medium-size businesses in Canada?

**Mr. Dufour:** If you're asking the question, you must know the answer. How much?

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** I think it's at least \$2 billion.

**Mr. Dufour:** Yes, but that's part of the entire management of the fund. But there have been deficit years and surplus years. I think it's relatively deficit-free now, but that's not the issue. When you talk about management, it's unthinkable that the federal government would agree, tomorrow, to collect from employees and employers while saying to Québec: You manage, so you issue the cheques. I mean, no government is going to agree to collect and then not issue

the cheques and I want to make that very clear when you talk about managing. If that's it, I feel there will be a problem negotiating with Ottawa.

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** One last reply and I'll yield the floor to the others. It seems to me that under Canada's health system, the federal government collects funds from the entire country and remits them to the provinces so that they can administer and manage their own system...

**Mr. Dufour:** Yes, but...

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** ...and does the same thing for social aid.

**Mr. Dufour:** ...but it's not taken directly off employees' and employers' pay cheques.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Dufour. Unfortunately, your time is up. We'll now move on to Mr. Hogue, who will be followed by Mr. Laberge.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Corbo, in the event that manpower policies are repatriated, what kind of arrangement with respect to worker mobility... You undoubtedly recall a good number of years ago, a minister tried to introduce job mobility across Canada and it didn't work terribly well. Nonetheless, there are workers in Québec who are mobile and want to move. And so, what kind of arrangement, in terms of worker mobility, do you envisage with the rest of Canada to ensure Quebecers that they can work at their trades?

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** I think we can cite the European common market as an example where labour mobility exists, and yet individual countries can decide on all kinds of arrangements. There is no constraint as such in having a Québec manpower policy, a manpower policy for other parts of Canada and allowing a measure of labour mobility. Geographical entities can easily make arrangements of that kind among themselves.

**Mr. Hogue:** I understand your answer. Arrangements can be made. I'm asking you what kind, what sort of arrangements?

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** But the Forum pour l'emploi hasn't defined in detail what the labour market policy in Québec would be. It has given the broad outlines of what we feel is necessary for Québec to shape its economic policies on employment. What's left to do is what I'd call the "blueprint" of daily activities, which can assume a variety of forms.



**Mr. Hogue:** Madame, and Mr. Chairman, groups have come before this Commission and have not spelled out in detail their position on a constitutional arrangement, and members of the Commission feel entitled, in this way, simply to ask questions of perspective and I was asking this question in the context of a rearrangement. Because when a step is taken, all things being equal, you can try to ensure a certain number of consequences.

**Mr. Corbo:** Mr. Chairman, I think Mrs. Poulin has given a very good explanation of how the Forum could approach this kind of question. What the Forum does is it starts with the question of employment, looks at the existing constitutional and political arrangements and says that from the outlook of employment development and promotion, it seems to us that it would be better to integrate, at the level of the gouvernement du Québec, a number of things that are currently shared between two levels of government. We haven't gone into detail and we didn't feel it was the Forum's role to go into detail on constitutional issues, in the sense that there are experts for that. But we felt it was important to indicate in which direction, to ensure employment development which we feel is a basic issue, toward what kind of change we should be heading.

**Mr. Hogue:** But you appreciate anyway that by implementing a policy such as you describe, there could be problems of arrangements for workers who would like to be mobile.

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** The only answer we can give you is that it isn't a problem as such. It's a decision that is part of the labour market policy, whether it's exclusively up to Québec, or Québec and Ottawa, whether it's in the province or outside. What I mean is, those are details. Labour is mobile in Canada at present, and I don't think anyone wants to take this labour mobility away.

**Mr. Hogue:** But when you repatriate funds and a program, then you close a certain number of doors. But that will be fine, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Hogue. I now turn to Mr. Laberge, who will be followed by Mr. Beaumier.

**Mr. Laberge:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't really have any questions for the representatives. I'd simply say that you're virtually the incarnation of what can be done. When groups and organizations decide to discuss together, to find ways to fight unemployment, for instance, things can get done.

Just recently, I met my Canadian colleagues who are discussing, now, this notorious Canadian

commission. They are starting to discuss the potential for meetings between organizations to see if there might be a way to get together to discuss things. You have to admit that here in Québec, we've come a long way. We've come a long way, and I certainly won't hold it against you that you have not recommended constitutional arrangements, because I'm one of those who have been pleasantly surprised to see 27 very different organizations agree on a minimum of prerequisites, speaking of unemployment insurance, of course.

Speaking of unemployment insurance, I say: Ha, ha, ha! we'd be in a deficit position if we repatriated unemployment insurance. We'd be in a deficit position if we repatriated unemployment insurance because the focus of Canadian policy has resulted in unemployment always being higher in Québec than in Ontario and elsewhere. Even if unemployment insurance were part of a full-employment policy, it's quite clear that a whole lot of things could be done. There are a lot of things that could be done in terms of occupational training and everything else. I'm absolutely convinced that we'd reduce the unemployment rate. It's been done elsewhere, it's not as if we were trying to invent the wheel. It's been done elsewhere, and successfully and joyfully. There's no reason we can't do it. So, bravo! Congratulations!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Laberge, I'm not sure everyone knows whom you were congratulating. So, thank you.

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

**Mr. Laberge:** The representatives. You didn't think I was addressing you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** No, not at all! Mr. Beaumier, please, followed by Mr. Béland.

**Mr. Beaumier (Jean-Claude):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I offer the same accolades as Mr. Laberge since he said, at one point, during the discussions, that it was perhaps a first in Québec, when people from industry, education and unions came together to try to define employment problems.

As everyone knows, I've said it time and again, I've spent 32 years in education and the occupational training you mention in your brief was a special concern of mine throughout my career. Except that, some people, and one such person is seated at your table to tell us also, with the occupational training centres, that, to a certain extent, the regions should be given greater leeway for occupational training, the programs should have much greater local content. We should also be able to have more flexible budgets, to do things that even today, neither

the federal nor the provincial government authorizes.

Coming back to your brief, on page five, where you place the usual emphasis on local and regional development. There was also a brief that even talked about collecting taxes at the RCM level to establish development funds. I'll ask you a simple question. Throughout your process of reflection, have you thought of a mechanism to coordinate, from the local or regional standpoint, all these efforts in which all people of good will would like to see harmonious development happen in Québec?

Have you thought of this, a type of mechanism like this that would combine occupational training, employment development, and social affairs? There'll have to be regional mini-governments, there'll have to be decision-making mechanisms completely different from what we have today. Have you thought of that? Because it's important so that later, we can know what kind to develop, later, to flesh out all those organizations.

**Mrs. Bellemare (Diane):** Perhaps, to answer your question, we haven't yet spent time on, if you will, a complete design of what this structure might be. But we do have specific examples of other countries that have an active labour market policy and where the national, regional and local levels are genuinely integrated within a complex in which governments, with the social partners, are present at every level of program choice and program administration, in these countries which we, at any rate, visited in greater detail, such as Sweden, Norway and Austria. The labour market policy administers a set of programs. It's really a single window, where, on a national scale, menus are drawn up, in other words, various kinds of programs with pretty flexible standards. And the social partners, with governments, participate fully in setting up these programs.

Now, it's in the administration of these menus, in other words deciding what we're going to have for supper, that the local community chooses the measures that are most appropriate to its specific problem. For instance, in Sweden, where the organization has a long track record, it's even possible to forecast to a degree which communities might be affected, for instance, by a world economic recession, and which industrial sectors. They are alerted six months in advance, and told to prepare themselves to choose specific programs in their communities to deal with unemployment. And in the regions, taking into account the sectors that will be affected, the groups or industries, appropriate job training or job creation programs are adopted.

So, that's how the link is made. But at every level, governments and partners are involved in the administration and choice of measures.

**Mr. Beaumier:** My concern is that, at the regional level, we don't have all the mechanisms needed to take all the considerations you raise into account. The gentleman from occupational training had said that even those menus weren't enough. Some menus are very local, some occupational training programs require a complete change of direction. So, that requires a decision-making power different from a menu a person goes out and chooses. God knows that programs applied in some areas of education, once they begin to be applied, are sometimes inadequate.

(7:45 p.m.)

That more or less expresses my concern. I don't want to prolong the discussion on it. It's a concern we have. Regionally, looking at other government departments where decisions are taken quickly and decisions on programs can be taken, you don't have... To put it boldly, you don't let yourself get bogged down in trivialities, you act. It seems to us that when you talk about manpower development, in other words occupational training and employment, you've got a mechanism and it's going to take something to flesh out these regional mechanisms. Once and for all, you have to say you have this much room to manoeuvre and this is your budget. That's it, I wanted to know if you had thought of that. Thank you.

**Mr. Joly (Clément):** In fact, your question, Mr. Beaumier, I think that in recent years, there's been a lot of effort to involve the regions. The Forum pour l'emploi has travelled to the regions and asked many questions. In recent years, there have been economic summits and various meetings have been held. The Forum pour l'emploi has realized that, in fact, there are lots of things in the regions. It's a question of recognizing their efforts and supporting them and I think that's what's important because Québec, through its regional development, that's what will support economic development in Québec. You can't just target the main regions.

**Mr. Beaumier:** The problem is combining the strengths of the regions. That's what we're concerned with at the moment: gathering them from all points of view.

**Mr. Joly:** As representative of the Chamber of Commerce movement, I can tell you there's a real will to come together in the regions.

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** I can tell you that, to be effective, you need continuity, in occupational training just as in anything else, in any other program, you need continuity. You also need updated information and in the proposed strategies, the fact that participation and strategies are focused on employment, a common goal for everyone, means you can forecast problems that

can't be forecast at present. We always solve problems through hindsight. So, what's needed are regional organizations whose role, by bringing together partners in the regions, is to maintain the continuity of intervention and partnership, to ensure that the information network provides advance knowledge of what we economists can't predict. The labour market is too fluid, too changeable. Everyone now realizes that without that kind of information network, it isn't possible to produce effective manpower forecasts.

So, the change really looks radical, but it would also radically change the effectiveness and the capacity of people in the community to work together rather than in competition, squabbling over the next grant that comes in from outside.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Beaumier. We now move on to Mr. Béland, who will be followed by Mr. Turgeon.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Corbo, when you introduced the Forum pour l'emploi a while ago, you said it was a group of people who had reached the point of actually being passionate about employment. When you're passionate, you're always in a bit of a hurry. In how much of a hurry are you? I understand that in your brief, for the reasons you explained earlier, you did not set out a strategy, but if I recall correctly, because I was fortunate enough to participate in some of your meetings, you set yourself objectives of reducing under-employment within a few years. There were specific objectives. So, can you give us some idea of how quickly you would want to repatriate the powers mentioned in your brief? What time period seems acceptable to you?

**Mr. Corbo:** Mr. Chairman, I believe the Forum as such has not indicated deadlines in terms of a specific date or year. Nonetheless, since the sponsoring committee has been in operation, the spring of 1988, we have been very disappointed to note that unemployment in Québec remains high compared to the average. Now, if you're talking about unemployment as an economic and social phenomenon in Québec, basically, the Forum pour l'emploi would like to see, by roughly the year 2000, unemployment down to... some say a situation of full employment, others say to 3% or 4%, but all members of the Forum pour l'emploi are convinced that a serious effort is required, during the decade, to reduce it.

**Mr. Béland:** So, the repatriation you want must occur by the year 2000 or before then?

**Mr. Corbo:** Mr. Chairman, repatriation or

repatriations are important elements in an eventual reduction in unemployment. Other things also have to be done by Québec's socioeconomic representatives but, undoubtedly, like others, the members of the sponsoring committee don't want to see constitutional discussions needlessly prolonged.

**Mrs. Bellemare:** I'd like to add that there is perhaps a degree of urgency, given Québec's current economic situation. With market globalization, economic changes occur very rapidly and I think it's important that changes be made in Québec in terms of our labour market, our industrial structure. We'll be able to make these changes if we have the appropriate economic policies, in particular a macroeconomic policy encouraging our businesses to restructure themselves and enabling them to invest in training, research and development, but also economic policies like the active labour market policy that can promote the essential change that must occur within businesses if we want to revive our productivity and, if you will, develop businesses that are competitive in terms of quality and innovation. And when you speak of quality and innovation within a business, you're talking about a complete change in the organization of work based on much more frequent dialogue between employers and unions-employees and this dialogue, which can promote training measures within the business, will be initiated provided that in our Québec, since we are a society with many small and medium-size businesses, there are active labour market policies that encourage everyone to consider training, research and development as an investment rather than an additional expenditure.

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

**Mr. Payette (Michel):** Mr. Chairman, having attended nine of the twelve regional forums that preceded the national forum, I can tell you that, in every region, people took the question of employment very seriously, but they also stressed the difficulty of overcoming certain obstacles that stem from, as they said, confusion in programs and the difficulty in finding your way among all those measures, to such an extent that, from the standpoint of reducing the unemployment rate to 3 or 4% by the year 2000, I think the sponsoring committee had ten years ahead of it when the forum was over. If, during the first two years, we can overcome some of those obstacles - you know as well as I do that the Forum wants to act at the local and regional level where jobs are created - if we succeed in removing that obstacle in the first two years, then there might be a chance, in the next eight years, of achieving our objective by the year 2000.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to join those who've said bravo to the Forum pour l'emploi up to now, to those who initiated this group and those who have made it a reality. I think the Forum pour l'emploi will have finally cleared quite a log jam here. And what that's done – and I think it's also crucial for a whole sector of activity – is that the Forum pour l'emploi will have helped reach a certain psychological threshold concerning what can be done in Québec in terms of manpower and employment development. And I think that's very appreciable. I'd like you to say a few words to us on macroeconomics. I'd like you to explain to us, because some of us are ignorant in these matters, we aren't all experts like Mr. Béland or Mr. Dufour, how Canada's deflationary policy – if I've understood your brief correctly, that something exists especially for Ontario – how this harms Québec and how that can intensify the structural problems of our labour market?

**Mrs. Bellemare:** We're familiar with the deflationary policy currently in effect. It features very high real interest rates. That kind of policy is generally applied in Canada, while in Québec, the overheating we're now seeing in the Canadian economy is absent. As the economic structure is now, it results in the unemployment rate in Ontario declining long before unemployment rates in other regions, in other provinces, like Québec, the Maritimes, reach acceptable levels.

So, since the economy of southern Ontario is overheated, a restrictive monetary policy is applied. Interest rates are raised precisely to slacken the labour market in Ontario to prevent businesses from raising prices and workers from demanding wage increases. The reason for doing that is because it is felt this could spread to other regions. But, when these measures are taken – and unemployment is already high in Québec, for instance – when unemployment is high, you can't forget that that's also associated with long-term unemployment. And unemployment doesn't hit all groups of our population equally. Young people are affected in a different way than women; similarly for older workers. So, because unemployment is normally higher and normally lasts longer, there are very significant structural effects on manpower that are very difficult to undo afterwards. They say that unemployment becomes chronic after about two years, that is, the unemployed person loses any chance of integration, unless there are active labour market integration policies.

So, the type of monetary policy that attempts to counter inflation in Ontario has extremely adverse effects on unemployment, which, in turn, leads to a whole set of social

costs, crime, health, etc. at the provincial level.

It should also perhaps be mentioned that there are other ways to fight inflation. The active labour market policy is a tool that can be applied precisely to try to prevent overheating leading to shortages of manpower and, subsequently, increases in wages and prices in certain regions.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Fine.

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** I'd just like to add one point. I think we're underestimating the importance of the active labour market policy as a tool for macroeconomic stabilization. In countries with these strategies, macro policy is based on demand, that is, employment, stimulating demand, while labour market policies are based on productivity and reducing inflationary pressures, unlike Canada where the opposite is true, unlike Canada where we say that the overall policy is based on inflation and labour market policy should be concentrated on unemployment. We should be looking at the inverse, and that provides us with new instruments to apply to inflation, using policies that improve business productivity and the profitability of investing in human capital. So, it's exactly the opposite of what we do now.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Very well. We've come to the end of the question period. We'll now move on to the party forming the government. Mr. Robert Benoit.

**Mr. Benoit:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Corbo, many of my colleagues participated in the initiative you undertook throughout Québec, and we too want to congratulate you on the quality of the work, the vitality of the work you and your team accomplished throughout Québec. We've had more than 50 hours of sittings now, here and in Québec City, and you're the second group that's told us that there is in fact an overlap, a duplication between various provincial and federal programs in terms of job training, job creation, and I think that, if we continue for another month, we'll end up being convinced that there is indeed a problem there.

Your brief discusses, and I'm pleased to see it, employment and immigration. I think the myth is slowly fading away, that immigrants steal jobs from Quebecers. I congratulate you for also attacking that aspect of the problem of employment and immigration.

My question is, after 12 symposiums, how do you see the integration of immigrants? We all know that, frequently, immigrants arrive in Québec, find a job, spend a few months here and, often, because the economy is more buoyant elsewhere, whether in the United States or in Ontario, they leave. What can we do, once they have come to Québec, to keep them here through

their job? Did you give this some thought during your symposium, Mr. Corbo?

**Mr. Corbo:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, and I think Mrs. Folco is in a good position to address the Commission on that question.

**Mrs. Folco (Raymonde):** Thank you, Mr. Corbo. Yes, certainly, one of the main problems is that immigrants do what all Quebecers do, in other words, generally, many people head for the big cities and especially the major metropolitan centres. Joint action is important at the local level, the regional level, not just to create jobs, but along with such job creation, to set up reception and support systems so that immigrants who arrive stay here. Employment is certainly the crucial element, but it's not the only one. Reception structures are needed so that immigrants can take francization courses, in other words not just language courses, but courses to teach them how our society works and how they can integrate smoothly, francization courses, courses that would... not necessarily courses, but structures that would enable them to organize themselves and be able to meet Quebecers, those we call homegrown Quebecers. Basically, what I'm talking about is joint action at the local level, the regional level, in all components of society that will help immigrants to integrate.

(8 p.m.)

**A voice:** Thank you.

**Mr. Benoit:** We, in our party, have a youth commission that has been pushing us for months to reflect on the "orphan" clause, a clause that says the youngest ones in society, when they enter the job market, do not have the same benefits as older people or those ahead of them. During your symposiums, were you able to give some thought to that and what conclusions have you reached on the "orphan" clause?

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** First of all, I can say that there are people who are interested in knowing if these "orphan" clauses are important in collective agreements, and I was given a figure... only a few months ago, someone told me that barely 4% of collective agreements contain such clauses. I think what you have to remember is that when there aren't enough jobs in a society, groups that are working, who have the power to protect themselves, will always want to protect themselves and "orphan" clauses are the result of the fact that there aren't enough jobs and that labour market adjustments are done incorrectly. So I think "orphan" clauses should disappear from collective agreements. But I feel if employment increased, those clauses would disappear very quickly.

**Mr. Benoit:** One last question before asking Mr. Bélanger to continue. You speak of decentra-

lization throughout the brief, on almost every page. Yesterday, the Conseil des affaires sociales, dealing with a different aspect, of course, also suggested decentralizing, and went as far as the RCMs. How far would you like to see decentralization go? Is it a group? The single window you talk about, would you, indeed, extend it to the RCM?

**Mr. Corbo:** Mr. Chairman, the Forum, the sponsoring committee as such hasn't taken a definite position on such a specific point.

**Mr. Benoit:** Thank you.

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

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question deals with a study... (technical difficulties) unemployment insurance into work insurance or employment insurance and attach social aid programs to them, in other words, I assume you aren't including people classified... (technical difficulties) in social aid and the others... (technical difficulties)... employment program. I'd like to hear your comments on that. How would you link the two programs?

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** Unemployment insurance would become employment insurance. All I'm trying to get across is that the unemployment insurance fund would become the labour market policy fund and all those groups that can be called unemployed, that is, people who are looking for work according to the definition of unemployed, those people would have access to all the labour market programs, regardless of distinction, whether they have access to unemployment insurance or not because they don't have enough insurable weeks.

So, what you have to understand there, is that, in countries with an active labour market policy and, in addition to Sweden and Norway, we could mention Japan and Switzerland, the unemployment insurance fund is used for all these measures, as well as for occupational training. Manpower categories aren't compartmentalized. There are programs and access to those programs is open to all businesses in the country and all manpower in the country. Rather than really having focused programs by having two groups and delaying because they are expensive in either program, you integrate them into one unit, the labour market policy, financed by unemployment insurance, that's used to finance those programs.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** The organizations also mentioned the importance of looking at the phenomenon of poverty. They spoke of the Montréal region, but, according to

the Conseil des affaires sociales, it seems there are other regions in Québec where poverty is becoming a very serious social problem. From that point of view, could the formula you're proposing be used to deal with that problem? Is it a more proactive way of dealing with those problems?

**Mrs. Bellemare:** Yes, indeed, the phenomenon occurs throughout Québec. It also occurs in every industry, in other words, we have a phenomenon in which the middle class is disappearing and when we speak of the middle class, we mean wage-earners earning plus or minus 25% of the mean wage. And that is largely tied, on the one hand, to human resources management in businesses where more precarious jobs have become increasingly popular. It's caused by a high unemployment rate and also by an industrial structure where growth is stronger in so-called traditional services. Traditional services means restaurants, accommodation, retail shops or services, where wage rates are lower than elsewhere. An active labour market policy would deal with those problems on all fronts. First, through training. Because, since businesses would have a greater incentive to train, they would have a greater incentive to keep their trained manpower. That leads to a less precarious human resources management in business. On the other hand, it enables our manpower to improve its human capital and so become better qualified to specialize in the leading edge manufacturing sector and the dynamic services sector. This can have an obvious effect in the medium term because the deterioration of our labour market, as we now see in the macroeconomic statistics, is really tied to the deterioration we've seen over the past few years.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** One last question, Mr. Chairman. Are the programs of our school structures, our organizations, CEGEPs or conventional schools sufficiently flexible to adjust to the new needs created by job requirements? Have you thought of anything along those lines?

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** ...like in Canada. Occupational training and manpower re-adjustment is a major challenge. I think people who follow the labour market are aware of that. Traditionally, occupational training programs have focused exclusively on institutional programs. This meant they were removed from the labour market and from the information needed to determine whether the programs were really focused on the needs of changing businesses. The challenge we face is to how to link on-the-job training to our education system. I think the challenge can be met easily even though we still say that our institutions are rigid. What's needed is for all partners and organizations to accept

the policy objectives and then, clearly, the administrations will accept the changes and linkages will be established, as happens in other regions and other countries.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Thank you. I'll now turn over the microphone to my colleague, the Member for Matane.

**Mrs. Hovington:** I would really like to congratulate you and say that this is a first for Québec, that so many organizations gather around the same table, to really study why some regions are under-developed, in a chronic way, at any rate. And you're not the first organization. Every organization that has appeared before the Commission from the beginning has pointed to this incoherence or duplication in manpower programs at the federal and provincial levels, and stressed the incoherence in terms of regional development policy. You say, and I'd like to push you a little bit, in terms of regional development, on page 8, that local and regional development policy in Québec must be under the exclusive jurisdiction of the gouvernement du Québec, and that the direction of this policy has to be assumed by the local and regional levels. I'd like you to be a little more specific about how the government should support the regions and through which organizations? Where would regional development be most likely to produce maximum job creation spin-offs in the community? I'm thinking a bit along the same lines as Mr. Beaumier a few minutes ago. I'd like you to be a little more specific, provide a little more detail in your...

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** What we mean is, regional development, if we had an employment policy, is very closely related to labour market policy. Now, all countries recognize that regional development affects human resources mostly, namely entrepreneurship, research and development, training, the link between business and training needs. So, the labour market is intimately related to regional development and it's obvious that, if decentralization occurs at the regional level and the partnership is in place, then you have to go to the local level. You can't remain at the regional level, the 12 regions of Québec. It's clear that at that point there's no need to define in advance what the organizations will be. Institutions already exist. Clearly, some institutions will have to be reformed. We'll have to review our current structures that operate on an earlier model, to introduce the new model, but you do that like anything else. It's mechanics, not political work. It's a question of knowing where you want to go.

**Mrs. Hovington:** But exactly what power would you see? If certain federal powers are repatriated to the Québec level, there will be a

transfer from Québec to the regions. How do you view this organization?

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** The regions have to be given an envelope that will enable them to leave the menu Mrs. Bellemare (sic) mentioned, and to choose from the menu. And there should even be an interaction between the regions and national policy, so that the rules are flexible enough to adapt to 100 regions.

The other thing we can see and that we saw in the countries we visited, is that the region, at that point, becomes aware of the benefits to it and financing is available directly from the municipalities. We saw that in the...

**Mrs. Hovington:** Yes.

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** We saw that in Nuremberg. We met managers of the employment policy who were... the labour market, municipalities and union business circles and people indicated in which circumstances there had been a recession. The national government didn't want to contribute more money, but the regional municipalities decided to add more funds and set up new programs.

So that's what happens when the various networks are linked with the various partners, and when it is done throughout Québec, in the sense of having a network that thinks employment. It changes the whole philosophy.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Absolutely, and I agree with you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** That's all the time we have for that block of questions, Mrs. Hovington, and we'll now move on to the other group. Mrs. Harel.

**Mrs. Harel:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With your permission, I would like to immediately extend an invitation to Mr. Dufour, one he can't refuse. Since he also spoke yesterday of how easy it would be to repatriate the parental system that goes with, the parental leave that goes with unemployment insurance. So I invite him to join the extensive coalition that is currently taking shape to attempt right away to set up this Québec maternity leave fund and I'm sure that with his support, we will convince the Governor General, because the opting-out right included in the legislation incorporating the unemployment insurance fund requires the assent of the Governor General, that is, of the federal cabinet. But, I think if we all got together on this, we'd perhaps succeed. I say to you...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Do you allow Mr. Dufour to reply on your time...

**Mrs. Harel:** Yes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ...Mrs. Harel?

**Mrs. Harel:** Does he say yes or no? He has to answer yes or no, like in the referendum.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** That's a tall order, Mr. Dufour. You can pass.

**Mr. Dufour:** The results aren't all in.

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

**Mrs. Harel:** You're our hope, you represent a great deal of hope for the people I represent. But, listening to you, like some of the others who came before you, I have the impression of a kind of litany. I've simply noted words you've used during the exchanges you've had. Confusion, duplication, lack of coordination, muddle, incoherence, ineffectiveness, powerlessness. For me, it's not words, it's not abstractions. It's people who come to see me, they don't have mobility because they tell me their plant has transferred to Kingston or Cornwall, but leaving for them is out of the question.

And then, they don't have access to placement bureaus because placement no longer exists, either with Québec or Ottawa. That's not known as widely as it should be, it should be said more often. And then, occupational training is a mirage. It looks very nice on paper, but when they try to touch it, I don't know why, it disappears in front of them and, listening to you, I said to myself that far from regretting, you've given us another reason to be happy that Meech wasn't signed. Because clearly, had Meech been signed, occupational training and everything you seek as a priority for Québec, well, it wouldn't have been included.

(8:15 p.m.)

So, not only would it not have been included, but since we wouldn't have been given much, we would have been told to be satisfied with it for a long time. But, listening to you, I also ask myself how we're going to do this under sovereignty. Quite sincerely, I know it's very urgent, like you and like all those around the table, I'm convinced, too. It's not possible. We're at the point where, in a growing economy, the unemployment rate is 9%. Now, we're entering a slowdown that looks like it might become a collapse. Where does it stop? And afterwards, when do we start again? It's as though each recession is a wave. Each successive wave washes up workers on the shore who are suddenly bereft of skills. The demonstration in front of the room and the place we are now, this afternoon, reminded us that there were many people who earned an acceptable living until they lost

their job.

There are, after all, 100 000 more people on social aid in Québec than in Ontario, with 2 million fewer people. So there's a problem. And the problem, when you say an active manpower policy is needed, you have to be concerned with those who are out of work, whether they're on unemployment insurance or social aid that's become a kind of unemployment assistance, when you tell us that and at the same time, I hear Mr. Dufour say that it's going to cost us another \$1 billion or that it's going to cost business in Québec another \$1 billion, which means everyone, in a way, and it doesn't stop there. So, it's not just the Rockies that provide an additional reason for staying in Canada; now there are unemployment insurance benefits. It would start to pay off since the more unemployed we have, in proportion to the population... So, in your opinion, is this a factor that might dampen your desire to repatriate unemployment insurance?

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** I think the Forum has taken a very clear position. Were constitutional negotiations to take place, in spite of what Mr. Dufour has said, the Forum agrees that unemployment insurance should be repatriated. So I can only repeat the answer given in the brief of the Forum pour l'emploi.

**Mrs. Harel:** In the existing federal context?

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** That is, the proposal is a two-tiered one. In the first tier, we say that currently, regardless of the situation, Québec must be chiefly responsible for an active labour market policy. And to do so, it has to manage the unemployment insurance funds within its borders. That's the first part of the proposal. In the second, we say that in the event of constitutional reform, Québec should repatriate what I'd call the entire unemployment insurance system, to finance the active labour market policy.

**Mrs. Harel:** Thank you for reminding us, but there have obviously been others before us who tried to do that: Jean Lesage in 1966, Castonguay in 1970. And you know the agenda even better than I do.

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** Not unemployment insurance.

**Mrs. Harel:** No, but the entire social security system.

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** Yes, but not unemployment insurance.

**Mrs. Harel:** In that context, does the fact that... To what degree can you consider... This isn't never-never land, all of this. Just because

we ask for it, doesn't mean we're going to get it. I'll ask Mr. Corbo, for instance, how do you think we ought to proceed, in Québec, since it's urgent?

**Mr. Corbo:** I'd be tempted to say: Oh no! Mr. Chairman, to the question. But there you are.

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

**Mr. Corbo:** Mr. Chairman, the Forum is not a substitute nor will it be a substitute for the groups it represents, which have formulated specific opinions on how the gouvernement du Québec or Québec society should approach matters as they develop. I think this may be disappointing to members of this Commission, but it's important, given the nature of the Forum. We point out that, from the perspective of employment, we feel a number of things need to be corrected. I am convinced this Commission will be able to suggest to the National Assembly and the gouvernement du Québec specific strategies to do so. That's not the Forum's role as such, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Marois.

**Mrs. Marois:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to begin by thanking you for your presentation. You certainly know, and Mr. Corbo and Mr. Béland who also mentioned my passion for these employment issues, and so I essentially agree with your analysis, your point of view concerning the basic objectives that must be pursued, if we want to actually reach the number of jobs we wish to achieve, that we want to create, and, for all practical purposes, especially achieve full employment.

Your example of joint action is surely one of the first necessary and desirable bases and, from the perspective of this policy to be implemented, its major contribution must be pointed out.

At the same time, when you try to achieve that objective - and here I tie in with my colleague - you have to have means and objectives. If that's your objective, you have to ask yourself what means will help you achieve it. And if I'm not mistaken, referring to your brief, basically, there's one thing you don't repeat but which is basic to an employment policy. That's a political will among all partners: the government, labour partners, employer partners, etc. It's joint action, and you practise it. There are no lessons to be learned here. It's decentralization, and you talk about it. It's labour market policy and manpower policy.

Now, I find you're a little timid, if not naive, as to the means to use to achieve the objective. And there, I'll proceed with specific



questions on your brief. Occupational training. Your recommendation is on page 4. You say that the federal government must be convinced to hand over to the gouvernement du Québec all the funds it allocates to Québec in this area – that is, occupational training, of course.

That's going to force us – with your permission, I'll leave your text to ask a question – to live with the resources they agree to collect on our behalf and subsequently remit to us. Just a minute, I'm not finished. I'd prefer to sequence them to put them in perspective. You then go on to talk about placement, entry into the labour market and assistance for job creation, and you obviously speak, it goes without saying, of decentralization. Will a government with half-powers agree to decentralize a quarter of them, knowing it will always be caught between a rock and a hard place, between the senior level and local or regional level?

Third example, local and regional development. And this is interesting. You say that local and regional development policy in Québec must be under the exclusive responsibility and jurisdiction of the gouvernement du Québec. Take any framework agreement on regional development, that can mean mines, forests, technological development, occupational training, tourism, transportation. Can you imagine that, without a fundamental change and without a new balance of power, we can really bring that about concretely?

**Mrs. Poulin Simon:** I'll go back to the idea that decentralization, without all the powers and when the federal government gives us the money it wants to – clearly, each level of government will decide its own policies – but that wouldn't prevent Québec, considering the money the federal government wants to decentralize, from deciding to contribute more money, if it considers that money can be productive in other ways for Québec's economy. That's my first answer to the question of repatriation of money redistributed to Québec.

Decentralization is not possible without all the powers. I think we have some knowledge... I'm not sure you understood the first proposal on unemployment insurance. In other words, Québec has prime responsibility over all labour market policy in Québec; the federal government is excluded. So, it has control over all programs, all objectives we may want to give that policy. So, if it controls that objective, it can also decide to join with regional partners to give it a focus that's consistent with what Québec wants.

**Mrs. Marois:** Allow me to respond to that. Obviously, I think we've known each other long enough to agree that currently, the main points of contention in Québec, at the local level and the regional level, concern precisely the jurisdictions of each of the two governments so that

one has insurance policies, the other administers assistance policies, and that each tries to shift client groups to the other, particularly when times are tough. Because that's also part of the price of federalism, and you have to have lived in the regions, worked on those policies to know how much they cost. So, I agree wholeheartedly with my colleague, in the sense that isn't it a kind of wishful thinking that, despite all the good faith, all the good will, all the energies the gouvernement du Québec, the partners throughout Québec might want to invest, you come up against, whether you want to or not, inconsistencies that, if we don't have a number of powers now – I'm not saying all powers, I'm saying some powers and I could go over the themes – we won't reach the objective we want to establish.

**Mr. Corbo:** Mr. Chairman, what the sponsoring committee of the Forum is telling you deals precisely with the question of employment. We could significantly develop employment and reduce unemployment, provided the gouvernement du Québec assumes a certain number of responsibilities. Moreover, Mr. Chairman, I realize our society is engaged in an extensive process of reflection. This Commission will consider and make recommendations. The Forum wanted to bring some important points to your attention, from its own angle, on the issue of employment. We think your subsequent reflection will enable you to make recommendations that will lead us out of what you call wishful thinking. And, Mr. Chairman, for my part, I say that the members of the Forum pour l'emploi have not allowed themselves to be bogged down in wishful thinking. They have clear views on what has to be done, but they do what they have to, period.

**Mrs. Marois:** That's all, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I was going to ask whether you had a final question, but I see that you don't. I could ask you whether you have a final answer, but since there's no question, we won't invent any. All that remains is for me to thank you, and your group, for your presentation this evening, Mrs. Bellemare, Mrs. Poulin Simon, Mrs. Folco, Mr. Joly, Mr. Payette and you, Mr. Corbo.

**Mr. Corbo:** Mr. Chairman, with your permission...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Sir.

**Mr. Corbo:** ...several members of your Commission have generously praised the Forum pour l'emploi and its sponsoring committee. I think that will make the members of the sponsoring committee very happy, those who for some time now have been trying to achieve

things that often seem hypothetical, a dream. Mr. Chairman, I want to take advantage of this opportunity to say that some of the compliments the sponsoring committee of the Forum pour l'emploi has received should go to Mr. Claude Béland who, from the beginning, has been in the chair, and chairing a committee as diverse as this one requires great skill. So, some of the compliments go to Mr. Béland and thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for listening to us.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Very quickly.

**Mr. Corbo:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. We'll now prepare for the next sitting.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:29 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 8:37 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We'll continue until about 10 p.m. That's an hour? An hour and a half?

**A voice:** An hour.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ...good, which will continue until about 10:00 p.m. but which, according to the timetable, should finish at about 9:30 p.m. Does that meet the requirements of the secretariat? So, the meeting will last one hour. Excuse me. I was going to say an hour and a half, but it's a one hour meeting with 10 minutes for the group making its presentation, 10 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the government, 10 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition, 25 minutes for members registered with the chair, each of whom has five minutes.

We'll begin, Maître Grey, by asking you to introduce the people with you and then to begin your 10-minute presentation before moving on to the questions. Maître Grey.

#### **Task Force on Canadian Federalism**

**Mr. Grey (Julius):** The members present are Claude Décary, on my right, Louis-Philippe Rochon, Roger Comtois, my co-president, and Professor Anastasopoulos, our economist. The presentation will be in two parts: I will do the first half, and my colleague, Mr. Comtois, the second.

I would like to begin by saying that we are a group of 50 to 100 individuals who, during the summer, believed that our respect for Québec and for the process which you represent required that we participate fully and perform a difficult task, which we undertook. We began studying

Canada and Québec and we came to the conclusion - which is, of course, a preliminary one since we have not completed our consultation - that there are four factors which make Canada a country that has a very good reputation throughout the world, a virtually incredible reputation, better than that of most countries, even democratic ones. First of all, there is the freedom that Canada gives its people, freedom equal to that of any other country including the United States.

Second, is social justice, a social justice rivaling that of countries such as Sweden and other European countries.

Third, our cultural wealth, multiculturalism, the presence of many communities, which not only contributes to the cultural enrichment of everyone but also enhances the freedom of each of us, because there is no prescribed model for being a Canadian; we are each a Canadian in our own way.

Fourth, the absence of outmoded nationalism, flags and loyalties. Canada no longer requires us to die for our country, but rather to live in what I call outmoded nationalism which often predominated in Europe in the 19th century.

In my opinion, it takes some very good reasons to destroy, break up or disrupt such a country. We did not find any. We found that Québec has all the powers it needs to ensure its full development while preserving its uniqueness; that, over the past two decades, it has succeeded in creating a largely Francophone State, a State which is distinct economically and in other respects; that there is no evidence of danger to the French language - that some say is ever present but that we did not find; that the economic consequences of moving towards independence would be harmful, could not improve anything and, at worst, might prove disastrous; that it is possible to have constitutional amendments that would satisfy everyone; and that civil and individual liberties are always better protected by federations than by unitary states. Of course, there are never any absolute guarantees, but it is always better to have a federation and outside courts which protect our personal freedoms. Consequently, we have found no valid reason at this time to break up or disrupt a country such as this, a country that is regarded as a model in nearly every corner of the world. I am now going to turn the microphone over to Mr. Comtois.

**Mr. Comtois (Julius):** Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen. I practise private law. I am, of course, interested in public law and in constitutional law. For a number of years now, the greater part of my professional work has been devoted to family law, more particularly, to the liquidation of matrimonial regimes.

If I may compare the political situation

which concerns us all to that which exists between a husband and wife whose marriage is breaking up, I would use an allegory inspired by my colleague Jacques Brassard — not to be confused with the MNA — who, in a magnificent volume, which will no doubt be read and reflected on by the Commission, makes a comparison at a certain point when he talks about integral federalism, and says that it would be easy to see a clear illustration of this analogy in Canada, where French Canada has long played the role of the wife seeking freedom. We could easily expand on this theme: double bed, twin beds or separate bedrooms; the role of third parties and personal finances; the free woman, the kept woman, disagreement, divorce and reconciliation, etc.

I see this allegory applying since the adoption of the Civil Code in 1866, at about the time of Confederation. Any woman married in Québec was subject to near total legal incapacity. Marriages were indissoluble and this indissolubility lasted until the adoption of the Divorce Act in 1968. Married couples therefore had to suffer through their difficulties with patience. Their only option was to obtain a separation as to bed and board, but the marriage subsisted. It should also be noted, as an indication of how attitudes have evolved, that in those days adultery was severely punished when it was attributable to the wife.

Times have changed. Civil law has been completely revised. The wife — and let us suppose, according to my allegory, that Québec is the wife — and the husband — represented, say, by Confederation — may end their union. But, after the marriage is dissolved, the wife is free to remarry her lover. The cause of the divorce may also, of course, be attributable to the husband and sometimes to both. The state of euphoria in which one or the other of the spouses lives — rarely both at once — is often undermined by the economic effects of dissolving the marriage. The end of the partnership necessarily entails a partition and liquidation of the spousal rights. They must divide up the family patrimony after having discharged the debts encumbering it. We have often been called on to act as expert practitioners to establish the economic rights of the spouses.

We have noted that rarely are the liquidation and partition deemed acceptable and satisfactory by both partners. It is unthinkable, for example, that one of the spouses should expect to keep everything that is in his or her possession without sharing in the debts of the marriage partnership. Divorce is a traumatic event and the economic aspect of the breakup is a contributing factor. Spouses involved in divorce proceedings will generally sign agreements on provisional measures. These agreements are the cause of many discussions, which are often emotional. As is only natural, each wants to set conditions regarding everything relating to the

rights and property that may have been accumulated during the marriage.

If I were to transpose these observations onto a more general level, I would make the following comments. Is it realistic to say, "Let's separate now and settle our accounts later"? It reminds me of the advertisement: Buy now, pay later. If two partners do not have the financial means to carry out a complete divorce, would it not be advisable to work out a *modus vivendi* that would make it possible, for the time being at least, to have a peaceful coexistence, even if it does not provide total happiness? Any agreement on provisional measures is going to entail claims that both sides will find difficult to accept. One can only hope that the discussions and negotiations will be carried out with objectivity between civilized people. In any case, if there is to be an economic and monetary union, it will not easily be viable without an acceptable personal and political association. Thank you.

(8:45 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Comtois. We shall now move on to the question period. We will begin with the parliamentary group forming the Opposition and the other Jacques Brassard has the first question.

**Mr. Brassard:** I will undoubtedly not be quoted. Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin with a stroke of humour by saying that it's not a divorce that is being called for; it's the annulment of the marriage on account of non-consummation.

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

**A voice:** ...a civil law...

**Mr. Grey:** You have one year within which to do that. By 1868, it was too late.

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

**Mr. Brassard:** I will not be continuing in a humorous vein, Mr. Chairman, because I am inclined to give in to the temptation, this evening, to express my indignation, I would even say my disgust, in the face of the insistence with which a postulate is being conveyed and peddled — for some, it is a dogma that was very dear to Mr. Trudeau — which says that federalism can provide better protection of individual rights and that those rights would even be threatened, if not flouted, in a sovereign Québec.

I would like to remind this Commission, Mr. Chairman, and this group, that in Amnesty International's 1989 report — and God knows they are highly credible in the area of human rights and freedoms — the following countries were identified as having violated human rights and freedoms. The Soviet Union, the country of the Gulag; I am not certain that Mr.

Solzhenitsyn would agree with your postulate. Argentina, Nigeria, the Federal Republic of the Comoros, Pakistan and India where Moslems and Hindus are at present killing each other over questions of religion.

In Mexico, in Venezuela, in Brazil, even in Switzerland where people have been thrown into prison for refusing military service... Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and I wish to point out to you that all these countries are federations, federal regimes, and are you aware that all of the world's federations, excluding Canada and the Federal Republic of Germany, were the object of criticism by Amnesty International in 1989, even the United States and Australia? And Canada is not above reproach since, according to your logic, it is supposed to have been better at preserving and protecting individual rights. I remind you of the historical facts.

The government apologized just recently for its treatment of the Japanese and the Italians during the Second World War. It has not yet apologized for its treatment of Quebecers in 1970 when human rights and freedoms were suspended and more than 500 Québec citizens were arrested without a warrant. I hope that apology is in the offing. The treatment of the Native peoples. The treatment of Francophones in Manitoba and Ontario. In Manitoba, there are more Francophones in cemeteries than on the streets. The treatment of Quebecers during the first conscription crisis in 1917, when the army shot and killed demonstrators in the streets of Québec.

And I could, of course, cite you unitary states where rights and freedoms are scrupulously respected: France, Great Britain, Italy, New Zealand, Sweden, Norway, etc. Which means, Mr. Chairman, that there is absolutely no correlation between a federal political system and respect for human rights and freedoms. And I am beginning to get sick of constantly hearing this postulate that a federal regime provides better protection of human rights and freedoms. It's not true. That has nothing to do with it. Absolutely nothing. Respect for human rights and freedoms is a matter of culture, of values, of society, and not political system. Really! I have no questions, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Grey:** But, just a minute, you are making a speech...

**Mr. Chevette:** Mr. Chairman...

**Mr. Grey:** May I reply?

**Mr. Chevette:** Mr. Chairman, since there is no question and I don't want to give up my time, I would ask you to defer it to the end.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Since the reply would take up time allotted for other

questions, I am going to ask Mr. Grey to use another question, whenever he thinks it appropriate, to make whatever reply he chooses. With the questions our members ask, it is very easy to reply directly to the question put and, at the same time, deal with parts of others, if one so wishes. So we are now going to move on to the questions from the group of other members. A maximum of 5 minutes each, for the questions as well as the answer. A total of 25 minutes. The first speaker is Mr. Jacques Proulx.

**Mr. Proulx:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, I am not a Parti québécois MNA and I would like to have spoken before Mr. Brassard because I think I would have said the same thing. When I read your brief, it made my blood curdle and, to use an expression from my rural background, I've never heard such hogwash...

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

**Mr. Proulx:** I found it so disjointed that I even asked myself the question: It's not possible; who wrote that? Who could have written a brief of this kind in 1990? So I checked the names because I said: Maybe it was people... I had the opportunity during the summer to visit the four East bloc countries that had just been liberated. I said: Maybe it was people from somewhere else who, for 45 years, have been completely cut off from what has been happening. They perhaps don't know that Canadians and Quebecers have evolved. But when I checked, I realized that it wasn't Hungarians; it wasn't Poles, or anybody like that; it was Quebecers and, presumably, Canadians. I even took the trouble to ask one of my friends to read the brief, in case I had misunderstood, and he arrived at exactly the same conclusions as I did, only to realize that we thought that the days of fear mongering had long since passed. It has been a long time as well since Québec's jurisdiction and ability to take control of its affairs has been questioned in this way. And I will tell you that your analysis is riddled with elements that are humiliating for all Quebecers, whatever their origin may be.

I am going to cite a few passages. On page 7, for instance, when you draw your comparisons: Federalism equals protection of democracy. I would have liked to enlarge on that, but I think that that has already been done in quite an extraordinary way. We were fortunate enough, at the second sitting of our committee, to have Mr. Demontigny, who came to give us a lecture on the Constitution, give us a lecture on Canada and the Federation. And that made me realize that some people had perhaps had the impression that we were very well protected. Except that if one wanted, under the present system in Canada, it is not necessarily respect... We have a lot of powers because it is a system which, from many angles, is skewed and entails powers under which

tomorrow morning, the federal government, in various sectors, in the name of security, protection and so on, can decide whatever it likes. And, of course, once you've said that, sovereignty is out; it doesn't protect democracy. And above all, you draw a more or less subtle analogy with the Third Reich.

On page 9: Sovereignty equals - once again; the question was just raised - violation of individual rights. I suppose that the war measures taken in Québec didn't happen within the federal system!

Page 26: Sovereignty and the maintenance of the pension and unemployment insurance plans. I don't know much about it but, already, for a number of years now, we've been warned that if the political leaders do not assume their responsibilities and raise contributions, even though I've reached the age of 51, I will not receive the pension that I would normally be entitled to. If I'm not mistaken, it is a federal government that is in place at the present time.

Sovereignty means departure from Québec, as in 1976, and as it was tried in 1970 when the Brink's trucks travelled from one end... to the other then had to come back.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** 30 seconds.

**Mr. Proulx:** Oh! Well! I never exceed my time limit, Mr. Chairman. Please do me a favour. I won't take long.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** One more minute, from the chair's time.

**Mr. Proulx:** Page 27: Sovereignty equals higher oil and gas prices. I don't know if you don't live in this country, but, for some years now, we haven't had sovereignty, and gas and oil have been going up one hell of a lot!

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

**Mr. Proulx:** Page 3 of your appendix makes an economic assessment: Immigration - and this is the humiliating part - "its choice of skilled and dynamic individuals has been limited because it has insisted on admitting primarily French-speaking immigrants. This, coupled with the exodus of a Canadian-trained group of Anglophones, will probably lead to a less skilled labor force." Now that's humiliating for Quebecers, for Francophones.

The question is not at all easy to ask. I am having a lot of trouble asking it because, underlying this humiliating and dogmatic analysis relating to Canadian federalism... because this analysis is not relevant. It does not reflect the Québec of the 1990s. It is based on the postulate that anything that is not the status quo is unlivable and dangerous for rights and freedoms

and for the economy.

One short question if you are willing to answer: Do you believe that, in 1990, Quebecers, irrespective of their origin, are going to believe your nonsense?

(9:00 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Proulx, you have used up your time but, since Mr. Grey is particularly anxious to reply, he will be given time out of the chair's allotted time to reply to the question you have just asked.

**Mr. Grey:** I think we have seen a lot of danger, particularly in Mr. Proulx's question. We are told, for example, that there is no danger at all with regard to personal freedom. That is obviously false. In Europe, the unitary states that Mr. Brassard cited yielded to an outside court on the question of human rights and without a "notwithstanding" clause. When Mrs. Thatcher loses a battle relating to Northern Ireland, she has no "notwithstanding" clause; she must abide by the judgment of Strasbourg.

Therefore, it is generally accepted. And it is not by comparing us to quasi-federations of the Third World or countries where there was never a true federation - because the KGB was, if you like, the government - it is not by comparing such incomparables that you are going to reach a conclusion...

**A voice:** Compare yourself...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Please!... time in order that each may speak at his allotted time.

**Mr. Grey:** I suggested the comparison with democratic federations. Now when Mr. Brassard listed for us the situations where Canada has had problems with human rights, he had every right to do so. He omitted, however, several things, perhaps because it suits his purpose. He omitted the prohibition of mixed marriages which Québec had until 1970. He omitted the Duplessis era and section 127 of the Civil Code. He omitted the Duplessis era. He omitted the things that we read daily in the newspapers, such as the statements made yesterday by the chairman of the Catholic school board. In all unitary states, especially where you have a majority that is very conscious of being a majority and thriving minorities as is the case here, there is certainly a danger. It is easier - and this is not something new that we have just told you; all the political science books will say it - it is easier to have complete protection, clear protection, within a federation. It was André Ouellet who said it last week. He was right.

As for the economy, you know, we are among adults. I am tired of these things. People tell us, "Oh! You want to frighten people; you want to frighten everyone because Quebecers

haven't got what it takes". We are among adults. There is nothing that can't be said. Let's take a cool look at the following question: Are all the resources and all the capital going to remain in place? It is not enough to say, "They are going to stay. They are already gone." There is no proof. It takes studies.

We cannot presume that we will be able to have an independent fiscal and monetary policy if we tear apart the only unit large enough to stand up to the United States because we are in a special situation on this continent. We have a big neighbour that has a lot of clout now, and will continue to have in the future, and only a Canada of 25 million will be able to stand up to it. Finally...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Grey, you have been given some of the chair's time in which to reply but you will have other questions which will allow you to continue your reply.

**A voice:** ...it's humiliating...

**Mr. Grey:** I feel humiliated because undoubtedly, you noticed... We are ordinary Quebecers. You spoke of the Poles and the Italians. Those people are ordinary Quebecers too. We did not want to humiliate anyone, but we did want to raise questions among adults. Everything can be said and that is...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Grey. We are now going to hear from Mr. Dufour.

**Mr. Dufour:** Mr. Chairman, I am going to give the chairman the chance to complete his reply. I will not take the full 10 minutes because this is a brief...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Just as well, especially since you only have five left.

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

**Mr. Dufour:** Extraordinary, Mr. Chairman. One can choose whatever pages one wishes in a 33-page brief. Mr. Proutx chose his. So I'm going to choose mine. Take page 11, for example, which leads us back not to the political debate, but to the economic debate as such.

You have begun, moreover, to answer in part the question I want to ask you. It concerns the creation of a significant international power where you say that, by forming a federation, small entities can obviously compete better in the international community. You go on to say that Canada was only invited to join the economic summit after a considerable struggle... proved its competence, etc. I would like to hear you

expand on that. I know you have economists who are highly respected, who have looked at this document and who, I might add, are invited to all of our symposiums. Therefore, they are competent; otherwise, they wouldn't be invited. I would like you to go into a bit more detail on this matter of states obtaining economic clout through federation.

**Mr. Grey:** I think that, once again, there are two things that one can do with this type of question. First, one can look at other examples where there have been federations, and our own example where Canada was finally invited to take part in the meetings of the eight Western powers, which would never have happened with a sovereign state of 7 million or 8 million or another of 15 million. Australia has not been invited to take part. Australia has a population roughly equal to that of English Canada, a bit smaller.

There are the other examples as well, the Common Market which is certainly becoming a federation, and will be a federation within a year if a currency union is achieved, which appears likely since the only government that seems to be against it is having a lot of difficulties these days and is on the verge of toppling. If Europe achieves a currency union as well as overall union in 1992, as planned, living standards are sure to be boosted to an incredible extent by federation. But, in general, I think that, in a larger world, the world of communications, it is essential to have larger units, to have a fiscal and economic policy on a larger scale, and I wish to point out that those who claim that the Québec dollar, per se, could survive, are perhaps right, provided that it is pegged to the U.S. dollar. But then Quebecers would lose 30% influence on a real dollar with which one can have a fiscal and economic policy - whether one agrees or not with the policy followed by the government - in order to have a dollar that has absolutely no influence, of course, on the United States.

I think that it would be much more difficult to control interest rates in a sovereign Québec than in a larger entity. Again, I'm not saying that we should amalgamate with just anyone, because the logical consequence would be: Why not join the United States? I think that there are other considerations as well which work in Canada's favour, but I think it is obvious that the trend today in nearly all Western countries is against the creation of new small states. That was the trend in the 19th century. Today, we need a State that will have full powers, both fiscal and monetary, and that will be able to take part in planning with Japan, the United States, Germany...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Roger Nicolet now has the floor, followed by Mr.

Libman.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Mr. Grey, I, too, have of course examined your brief, and I wondered about the finality of this text. It seems to me that you have undertaken the task of defending your vision of federalism. Do you truly believe that, by tackling the dialogue in the tone you have chosen to use, you can modify or contribute to a true national dialogue with all Quebecers?

**Mr. Grey:** I think, Mr. Nicolet, that it must not be presumed that all Quebecers are on the side of Mr. Proulx or Mr. Brassard. I believe there are a great number – in my view, a silent majority – who are attached to Canada. And I think that, if there are people – and I'm not denying it – who, in good faith, believe that, for one reason or another, Canada should be radically modified, there is only one way to draft a brief in, as I've said, an adult fashion. And that is the direct and honest way. It seems obvious to me that Quebecers are entitled to know what the economic consequences will be, what the social consequences will be, what the risks are in terms of population. The tone is not, contrary to what Mr. Proulx felt, humiliating. Our brief was prepared by Quebecers for Quebecers. One must tell the truth as one sees it. It is quite obvious that, of all the reasons that have been given to date for having a new sovereign system, there is not a single one that carries the least bit of weight from a logical standpoint. In the end, sovereignty is based on emotional motives because, logically, there is nothing in favour of full sovereignty for Québec. Of course, amending the constitution is something that can be done. There are all sorts of things that can be done, but I think that we owe it to Quebecers to treat them as adults. Unlike Mr. Proulx and Mr. Brassard, we respect those who do not accept our opinions, but it is our duty to express them directly and openly. Sovereignty will be... if we were to take such a step... is going to sacrifice this generation. I think that this generation does not want to be sacrificed for a totally ephemeral goal.

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

**Mr. Nicolet:** I'll be brief, Mr. Chairman. I have listened to you. I have heard you, Mr. Grey. I would like to conclude by referring to your opening statement where you made reference to a preliminary report; it seems to me that, if the work of this Commission is to result in a broad consensus within the Québec population, it is of prime importance for us to re-establish a dialogue with the English-speaking community. It seems to me, unfortunately... Whereas this morning we were treated to the

beginnings of a dialogue with the Board of Trade, unfortunately, I can only note that the framework surrounding our discussions with you is unfortunately faulty. And I trust, to come back to your opening remark, that when you have heard, as we have for a week now and will until the end of the year... when we have had the opportunity and you have had the opportunity to hear all the positions taken by our fellow citizens, that then you will make the necessary analysis and gain a new awareness of the situation and I trust that then we will be able to resume our dialogue in a more serene context.

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

**Mr. Grey:** But why is it necessary to proceed with the community...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Grey, Mr. Libman now has the floor.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In light of some of these questions and comments, I would like to emphasize the fact that we have before us a group made up of the most renowned constitutional experts in our country, a group made up of Francophones, Anglophones and people whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, to react first of all to the point made by Mr. Nicolet. And some of the people in this group were invited to testify before this Commission as experts. But my question is as follows: This past summer, we heard what the Commission-Jeunesse of the Liberal Party of Québec had to say about a politically autonomous Québec with economic ties to the rest of Canada. When they talk about political autonomy and given certain things we heard about from Mr. Rémillard, who was talking about a supreme court of Québec, do you believe that a supreme court of Québec is one of the things required for the political autonomy of Québec, for the highest court to be in Québec instead of its being the Supreme Court of Canada?

**Mr. Grey:** I think that it would be a big mistake. I have two things to say on this subject. First, the Supreme Court of Canada now has an excellent reputation – better than that of the Supreme Court of the United States, for example, which is too political, or the House of Lords, which is too positivistic and too narrow in its legalism. So, we have one of the best supreme courts, where appointments – although the appointment procedure leaves something to be desired – since 1968 have not been overtly political or even political at all. Second, throughout the world, in Europe for example, there is a tendency to create external supreme courts. The goal of the court is precisely to

protect cases that are unpopular, cases that are in the minority. It is therefore very dangerous to create a court that will be controlled by the supreme legislature of a single country. It is much safer – and all countries know this, which takes us back to our first question... civil liberties – notwithstanding the opinion of Mr. Brassard – are better protected in federations, in situations where protection is provided from the outside. This is human nature. It has nothing to do with Québec or any other place. It has nothing to do with any inability on the part of Quebecers. It is a general rule.

It is better to have a supreme court made up of people from all over who have the wisdom of many different places, many cultures; who do not, if you will, have the uniformity that a supreme court of Québec would necessarily have. I would like to point out that there are many people who think that this is precisely Canada's problem, that Bill 101 was quashed on several occasions. I should add that these cases were based on legal grounds. If Québec were a democracy – and I have no reason to believe that it would not be – it should also submit to judicial review. The decisions should be the same and, what is more, it would be much safer to have an outside court.

I am going to give you a final example of outside protection being greater: The United Nations have just condemned Bill 178. For some reason or other, this has not gotten much publicity. It is obvious that it is not safe to leave this kind of question dealing with fundamental freedoms up to only one majority jurisdiction. It takes a supreme court from all over to make this decision. Once again, if the courts of all the states in the U.S. had been supreme, do you think that desegregation would have succeeded in 1954? (9:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Libman:** Mr. Chairman, just to conclude...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You have one minute left, Mr. Libman.

**Mr. Libman:** I just want to follow through on the angle mentioned by Mr. Nicolet: the question of dialogue being important. I would like to ask the co-chairman, Mr. Comtois, a question. This question of dialogue, do you believe that at this time, as Mr. Nicolet mentioned, there is a silent majority of Francophone Quebecers who are open to discussing, in this kind of discussion that supports federalism per se, open to discussing amendments to federalism?

**Mr. Comtois:** I think that today's events... I imagine that Mr. Nicolet, who referred to this morning's presentation by the Board of Trade, and perhaps the news item in today's newspapers, regarding Mr. Donderi who declared that he

was a member of our group. I read a little while ago – I was right next to him – the full text of the speech he gave. He is entitled to his opinion, but never spoke at our meetings when we were preparing our brief. I don't even remember having seen him. This evening, since he was looking a little shamefaced, I chatted with him. I read the whole brief and I would not have signed it, obviously. It is extremist, but I believe that he has a right to his opinion just like everyone else and the content is no more extreme than many other things.

Now, is dialogue possible? I wanted to bring up the divorce/marriage example – by the way, Mr. Brassard, even annulment produces the same effect as divorce from the civil point of view and, failing consummation of the marriage...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Maybe that's what Mr. Brassard wants.

**Mr. Comtois:** The Jesuits are the only ones who...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Comtois, I must interrupt you. We have used up all of Mr. Libman's time. I repeat that there will be other questions and that you will be able to follow up on your answers. Mr. Larose will be followed by Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Larose:** Mr. Chairman, I appreciated this text a great deal, particularly because a number of concepts are given greater prominence than in other briefs – that of sovereignty and that of federalism. But I noticed a certain omission, that of the concept of people and the concept of nation. I was informed that there are those in your group who are very devoted to the cause of the Native peoples and the fact that there has been this kind of omission leads me to conclude that this devotion is in all likelihood one of political opportunism.

Secondly, I would like to remind you of the examples of federalism that you give us on page 6... None brings several peoples together. They are federations within one and the same people. The bottom line is this colossal effort to try to develop the argument so many people have talked about, that federal states provide greater protection. You can say it in the manner of a Buddhist turning his prayer wheel, but the facts dispute it. I would like us to take a look at Canada first. It has been said before: It wasn't Québec that imprisoned all those people we have just talked about. But let's not go that far. Let's look at today's facts regarding the situation of the Native peoples.

In this racist – your friend calls it Nazi – Québec, according to a federal government study, Native peoples in Québec have better housing, in more hygienic buildings than in Ontario. Their sanitary facilities are 29% better than those of



Canada as a whole. The income of the Native peoples in Québec is 75% of the Canadian average. And for the rest of Canada, it is under 70%. The population of Native peoples in Québec represents 0.7% of the population and they amount to 0.3% of the total prison population. In Manitoba, they represent 5% of the population and 24% of the prison population. In this racist Québec - this Nazi Québec - shouldn't we hope that Canada as a whole might be as racist and Nazi as Québec is? It seems to me that Canada's minorities would be far better off: Francophones and Native peoples. It seems to me your task force on federalism would be making a great contribution to the cause of individual rights in these communities by making this proposal. Secondly...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Larose, since your time is almost up, if you want an answer to your first question, you will have to let the group have the floor.

**Mr. Larose:** I know that they will take the time to answer us later on.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** There probably won't be any time later on.

**Mr. Larose:** I would like to ask if Mr. Donderi, whose positions we are now familiar with, has been denounced by your group or expelled from your group, or if he is a loyal member of your group. And, while we're on the subject, there is nothing surprising about Mr. Donderi's position. It is of exactly the same ilk as the text that you have presented here.

**Mr. Grey:** Mr. Larose, we are not here to denounce or expel anyone. Obviously...

**Mr. Larose:** ...racists...

**Mr. Grey:** ...Mr. Larose, let me answer. It is not racism. There is the freedom... We were never associated with his text, but all there is is an analogy that you did not like. What was being criticized was Bill 178, which was condemned by the United Nations. I have absolutely no intention of defending, attacking, denouncing or taking a stand one way or the other, but I want to say that what we are doing here is inviting Quebecers who are not lawyers and who are not members of the media to present briefs, and one has to expect that certain things will be said in an unusual manner, that stronger language will be used. We must not attack people because others will not come forward if we attack some because they used an analogy that you did not like. Why haven't you pounced on the chairman of the Catholic school board? Why didn't you speak out against Mrs. Payette? Why didn't the Parti québécois throw her out after the film

**Disparaître?** It's because we are not here to denounce or expel anyone.

I invite people with different ideas to express them directly and not hide them. But I don't think that you can attack an analogy. Besides, it's the same analogy. You talk about a Nazi, fascist Québec. No one said this - not even Mr. Donderi. The same kind of remark was attributed last year to Mr. Libman, who didn't even use this expression. We went through this kind of thing when Québec was criticized in the *New York Times*.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Grey, we established rules in an attempt to limit time.

**Mr. Grey:** And rightly so.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We have stretched the limits a great deal this evening to ensure your right to speak. We nevertheless need a minimum of discipline.

**Mr. Grey:** That's true.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** On behalf of the Chair, you have referred twice to the United Nations' condemnation of Bill 178. As you are well aware, it was not the United Nations but rather one of the committees of the United Nations. May I ask you if you agree that all the decisions of all the committees - all the decisions of all the committees - of the United Nations must receive the immediate approval of everyone?

**Mr. Grey:** All the decisions of all the committees of the United Nations, not necessarily...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Grey.

**Mr. Grey:** But when it's a question of a...

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

**Mr. Grey:** ...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Hogue has the floor.

**A voice:** Ha, ha, ha! I don't believe this!

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Grey, I would like to congratulate your group or congratulate you for your nerve or temerity, and at the same time your honesty, I suppose, but I don't really want to qualify that further... I'm going to tell you the truth as we see it, as I heard you speak it just a little while ago. I

have two questions for you.

First, you indicate that either complete independence or sovereignty-association would seriously jeopardize Québec's economy. My question is why does federalism offer Québec better protection against the economic problems of 1990? But, before you answer, I am going to ask you my second question. You can answer them both at the same time. I read your brief. I didn't want to get involved. I read it again. With God and my age on my side, I told myself that I would have to become involved. And that involvement was necessary. There have many questions and comments but this document was worth my becoming involved.

Everyone knows, around this table and elsewhere, and you know that I am not a separatist, nor am I about to become one. And everyone knows that I am a federalist. Up to this morning I was a pure, headline one, but what with Mr. Turgeon, I guess I have become more flexible. And everyone knows that I'm a "Pepsi" with a Ph.D. That's clear. Federalist, "Pepsi" and Ph.D. I refer to page 17 because I read on the very first page that you have to go back over your methodology in order to develop it later. Since you want to develop your approach, I would like to participate.

So, Québec and the history of Canada. "Je me souviens" - "I remember" represents an interest in the past, etc. This reminds me of common law, which also shaped modern Canada. On page 18 - because you show, and you say so, an objectivity that is almost above all suspicion - on page 18, you talk about Abbé Groulx and you identify him as an ultranationalist. It goes without saying that this is how the history books labelled him. Michel Brunet as an ultranationalist.

You get to Marcel Masse, not without comment. I must tell you, rightly or wrongly, that I contributed, not to the philosophy, but to the funds that were given to the Maison Lionel-Groulx in the riding of Outremont, and I am proud of having done so. And this consciously came from Ottawa. After these two ultranationalists, you talk about a great historian - you're still being very objective here - a great American historian, Parkman. Creighton is an important historian. Also, there is the last paragraph where for 18 lines you quote a text of Creighton's that is relatively difficult to grasp in French. At any rate, on the second line, I don't know, there must be a verb or a complement missing or something.

**A voice:** ... the English text.

**Mr. Hogue:** Anyway, I just wanted to say this in passing, because I read it in French.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** One

minute and a half, Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Hogue:** I have one minute and a half left? Then I have enough time to finish.

You know, Mr. Grey it's a bit bold to talk about schools and recount academic histories. I don't know any histories that are academic, except for those in fiction. But what I'm really getting at, and I ask you - you personally - to help identify me... Multiculturalism, on page 23, must be shared by all Quebecers in a French language or old stock melting pot. What would you call me? A "Pepsi" with a Ph.D.? Would you put me in a French language melting pot or an old stock one? Because, what exactly do you mean by a French language melting pot? And this is my second question.

**Mr. Grey:** If I may answer...

**Mr. Hogue:** Let me finish because...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Get on with it if you want Maître Grey to answer you.

**Mr. Hogue:** Yes, but I want to at least state my question.

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

**Mr. Hogue:** He can use the time allotted to the Chair, with the Chairman's proverbial kindness. Because, "much of the ardour for sovereignty was a preconceived rejection by Québec of English Canada". It is my impression that these are value judgments. It's a good thing you told me that we have to speak the truth as we see it. It is my impression that it is relatively subjective. Mr. Grey, my congratulations.  
(9:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Grey:** I would like to say, first of all, how I identify you. I put you in exactly the same position as me. I think that distinctions between people from the old stock and young people, new blood if you will, should disappear in this new Québec. I see how English Canada, which also had a national group, the Anglo-Saxons, which was dominant in the 1940s, has evolved to the point where the English language is not in any danger in Toronto or in Vancouver. But there is a kind of multiculturalism where there is absolutely no advantage to being of one ancestry or another. So, I personally do not make any distinction. I see a multicultural French language society, just as the other is an English language one, where French is the common language, but where a bit of the other cultures rubs off on everyone. Of course, the largest contribution is bound to come from the majority. But there are also other cultures that will contribute.

Regarding your historical analysis, I did not

attack Abbé Groulx. I utterly disagree, but I nevertheless think that he was a great historian in a certain way. I think that Abbé Groulx was right to think that if we had accepted an industrial way of life in the 1820s or 1830s, before the creation of the school system, a social network, assimilation might have occurred. From this point of view, I think that Abbé Groulx uncovered part of the truth. However, I think that Abbé Groulx, who was also a distant relative of my wife... I certainly have nothing against him personally. I think that his views are outdated and I unfortunately think sometimes that I am reading more and more in the newspapers - not in *La Presse* specifically, but in all the newspapers, in the media - I am reading a little bit too much about the analysis of Abbé Groulx, who appears...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Grey, you will have the opportunity to answer several questions.

**Mr. Grey:** Yes, that's right.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Since we have already used up the 25 minutes and there are several members left who have asked for the floor and you have used up the time allotted to the Chair and myself also, we are going to proceed in five-minute periods, since it's getting late in the day, with the cooperation of all the members of the committee, in order to get through the list of other members before coming back to the members of the two parties.

I am going to ask those who still remain to state their views or questions quickly, if possible, which would make it easier for Maitre Grey to give you brief answers.

We therefore continue with Mr. d'Anjou, followed by Mrs. Pagé.

**Mr. D'Anjou:** Mr. Chairman. In concluding, you say that the status quo is no longer viable, and that renewal is required. Québec and the rest of Canada need each other. The road to change must be that of renewed federalism. I would like you to describe what you mean by renewed federalism, particularly with regard to the federal government's spending power, which is the cause of an extremely difficult financial situation and which has imposed considerable spending on the provinces too, because of shared jurisdictions in various areas of provincial jurisdiction, where this has caused inefficiency and has led to unnecessary additional costs, etc. How do you see renewed federalism?

**Mr. Grey:** We gave you a list of amendments. The first thing I think is that amendments should be negotiated one by one, because we have seen what happens when there are too

many interests at the same time. There are many partners. It is difficult to negotiate these things.

Second, regarding spending powers, I unfortunately disagree with you. I think that these powers act as a safety valve. I think that Québec already has the rights it needs in cultural or educational matters, for instance. But it is often desirable for the federal government to be able to prevent - again, I often worry about a jurisdiction having too much power. Let me give you just one example. These things are not necessarily political. Take an institution like the Canada Council - if ever Québec's institutions were ever inclined to be too avant-gardist, for example, and were giving away money that was for classical theatre or the reverse, I think that the safety valve... I think that spending power should work both ways. I also think that constitutional changes should work both ways. I think that in the area of immigration or the Supreme Court, for example, federal powers should be limited. However, I think that elimination of the "notwithstanding" clause is still a desirable goal for everyone. And it would not constitute an increase in federal powers - federal powers would also be narrower because it would not have the power to use the "notwithstanding" clause - but I think that it constitutes an increase of the individual powers that I consider sacred in a modern society.

So, the answer is that there are many elements in the Constitution, relating to family matters, immigration and the Supreme Court, that could be changed to the benefit of the provinces. They should be negotiated one by one. And there are some things, including spending power, that should remain but that should clearly be on both sides, work both ways. Finally, the "notwithstanding" clause, the fundamental protection of freedoms should override the desires of the majorities to pass statutes that failed the test of section 1 of the Charter, which already provides them with adequate protection.

Therefore, I think that we must say this: We propose constitutional changes, which we readily admit are not disruptive. What would remain after our constitutional amendments is a country like Canada is now, where Ottawa would have powers and Québec City and Toronto would have powers.

Now, if we did not talk about reforms such as the merger of the Maritime provinces, it was because we do not think that this is any of our business. We work in Québec. If they want to join together, then they have that right, but it is not our place to tell them what to do. There are all kinds of changes possible. We are against disruption or upheaval.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Pagé, followed by Mr. Poissant.

**Mr. Pagé:** Well, gentlemen, first of all I would like to begin by telling you that I was very surprised by your brief, because even those groups who came to talk to us about federalism, who came out in favour of federalism – a right which I fully acknowledge since we live in a free country, where the freedom of speech and having different ideas is fundamental – all these groups spoke to us of the necessity of an in-depth reform of federalism. I must tell you that you may be on the side of the federalists, but you are the only ones to tell us that Québec's current powers are sufficient, that we mustn't get rid of the Canadian Constitution and the sharing of powers, and now you have just added the cherry on the top of the sundae: we must go and negotiate powers one by one. Do you have any idea? We've been at it for 150 years and we still haven't gotten even one...

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

**Mr. Pagé:** ...do we have to go through them one by one? In the list submitted to us by federalist groups, my dear Mr. Grey, we don't have until the year 2000, or the year 3000. So, I was very surprised.

This being said, I am very hopeful because you told us that you had not completed your study of the situation. I find that reassuring.

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

**Mr. Pagé:** You know, I am a union president, but for a long time I was a teacher and when my students would tell me that they hadn't finished working something out, I would give them homework and lessons to do. I am going to ask you to read the brief by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, which talks about repatriating powers to Québec, and there are others, the brief by the Forum pour l'emploi, the brief by the Chambre de commerce du Québec, the brief by the Montreal Board of Trade, and the brief by the Fédération des groupes ethniques du Québec. I think they will convince you of the need to repatriate powers to Québec.

Secondly, I am also going to ask you to look into the situation of Francophones outside Québec – since you are so worried – to arrange a meeting with the Fédération des francophones hors Québec. They will reassure you about the impact that Québec sovereignty would have on their future. And when you tell us that the French language situation has improved in Canada, I would invite you to reread the latest Statistics Canada figures for the past 20 years: you will find that the number of French speakers has constantly decreased.

While we're on the subject of homework, I want to ask you to arrange a meeting with the Conseil du statut de la femme, which will explain to you that the nice federal model with its two

charters goes against the rights and freedoms of women. I invite you to arrange a meeting with them. We heard them last night.

Finally, my last point, you are going to have lots to do, you'll see. You are very worried. You say that Québec is ambivalent about multiculturalism. So, I invite you to go over to the ministère de l'Immigration, the ministère de l'Éducation and the school boards, where you will discover a concept with which you are unfamiliar: interculturalism, which is the choice that was made by Québec over multiculturalism. And I am even going to ask you to go and find out about the programs in Québec for teaching heritage languages, which include courses on heritage cultures, and this is a model which isn't as advanced in the other Canadian provinces. I think that once you have done all your homework, I am confident that what you told us as a premise, that you have not finished studying the subject matter, that your analysis will be complete and enhanced.

**Mr. Grey:** I'm familiar with the things you're talking about. I've done a lot of work in immigration.

**Mr. Pagé:** It doesn't show in your brief.

**Mr. Grey:** I am also familiar with the Québec school system. You tell me that the other federalist briefs anticipate a reshuffling of powers. Well, ours does too. I think that it is a question of degree, whether or not we're talking about an upheaval. We may be the only ones to think that spending powers are well founded, but that's a minor detail. I think that if you reread the federalist briefs that have been submitted, you will find the following, that these briefs – the Chambre de commerce, Board of Trade, economic associations such as the Manufacturers' Association – were mostly concerned with economics, and they were prepared to say, well, if there are some things that Québec wants, they agreed. But the things that they agreed on were more or less the same. I invite you to reread the things that we have read, the same as ours...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Grey.

**Mr. Grey:** ...except that we say that it's not...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** That's all the time we have. We are nevertheless going to continue. I have three people left who wish to question the group, and they are all experienced at this sort of thing: Mr. Poissant, Mr. Laberge and Mr. Ouellet. I am going to ask all three of them to make their comments or ask their questions briefly so that you will have a

bit of time to answer. Mr. Poissant.

**Mr. Poissant:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the quality of your brief, I don't have anything more to add. For the sake of the debate, however, I would like to ask you two purely technical questions. You say on page 4 of your brief that no country or province can decide upon such an arrangement - sovereignty-association, I assume - without the consent of its proposed partners. Why do you say this?

**Mr. Grey:** I think that what we have here is a situation where the province and the federal government are sovereign in their own areas of jurisdiction. It would therefore be impossible for the federal government to negotiate on its own a sovereignty-association arrangement with Québec, because there would still be changes to elements affecting the other provinces. It would also be practically impossible to negotiate a situation with a parliament, in which Québec must be represented, if there was ever monetary or fiscal union, for example, because Québec must have its monetary and fiscal share of the government, so to speak, but with Québec not participating in certain things. There will certainly be opposition from others who will say: Listen, you can't get 30% of the votes if, for instance, you do not fully participate. The consent of the others would definitely be required to rearrange things in Ottawa.

Therefore, in my opinion, the negotiation of a sovereignty-association arrangement is practically impossible. Even negotiating sovereignty would unfortunately call for the participation of the provinces because, from the constitutional point of view, it is not feasible. This is in fact because Québec and the other provinces already have a degree of sovereignty...

**The Chairman Mr. (Michel Bélanger):** Any other questions, Mr. Poissant?

**Mr. Poissant:** Yes, more or less along the same lines. You also talk about the free trade agreement with the United States. You say that Mexico will have to be added on, and that that's going to be more difficult. My question: First of all, do you believe that... Are you telling us that we could not automatically transfer from Canada to Québec or be joint partners in this body?

**Mr. Grey:** Exactly. You know, we wrote our brief before November 2nd, but it was said - in last week's newspapers I think - that there was an American economic authority that says that of course, if there are any changes in Canada, that the contracts in general will all have to be reviewed. Contracts, if the parties change, do not automatically remain in force. So, this would have to be negotiated. I'm not saying that it

cannot be negotiated but we definitely did not carry much weight anyway when free trade was being negotiated. We accepted all sorts of things. Personally, I would not have signed it - I have to admit - but we agreed to all sorts of things that were favourable to the United States.

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

**Mr. Grey:** Think about how a thing like that would be renegotiated between the two countries.

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

**Mr. Laberge:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I am correct, you do not represent any group. You represent individuals, experts, as Mr. Libman pointed out a little while back.  
(9:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Grey:** Between fifty and a hundred people.

**Mr. Laberge:** That's what he said. Some of them have even attended symposiums held by the Conseil du patronat, if I understand you correctly. Well that qualifies them, that qualifies them. Except that I'm having a bit of trouble here. You say that in Québec we have a greater tax burden, whereas, for the first time in our lives, we have been congratulated by the Chambre de commerce du Québec and the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, who said that businesses were doing much better in Québec than in the other provinces. Less jurisdiction and productivity than Ontario, whereas they were saying exactly the opposite. You are going to put Mr. Dufour in an awkward position. Either you are the experts or he will be obliged to tell the others that they made a mistake!

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

**Mr. Laberge:** Québec's economy is more vulnerable to recessions; there too, they said the opposite. I'm sorry but... it's almost like you were astronauts or something.

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

**Mr. Laberge:** I think you must come from another planet and have just landed because... I mean, really! You make assertions. You are the only ones who can make assertions like that. I'm looking at page 34... you are the only ones to call the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, the Caisse de placement et de développement!

**Mr. Grey:** It was a typing error!

**Mr. Laberge:** No, but actually it's... You say

that French is regaining ground everywhere, whereas we heard Francophones from outside Québec who came here to cry out for help; they are all dying out. You assert that the French language is doing just fine.

**A voice:** ... in Québec.

**Mr. Laberge:** If it's doing better in Québec, it sure hasn't been thanks to federalism, if you please! When you say that individual rights are protected better in a federation... come on! Your memory must be playing tricks on you. I'm going to refresh it a bit because I went through all this.

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

**Mr. Laberge:** Someone mentioned the Japanese and Italians a little while back. The federal government, fifty years later, has just offered an apology. But the War Measures Act... let me tell you that there are several hundreds of Quebecers whose most sacred rights were violated. No placard saying: Get rid of your placard. In prison, without a lawyer, with no right of appeal, nothing. And they spent days and days in prison. But wait, you gentlemen politicians, Mr. Rémillard and Mr. Guy Chevrete, I'm sorry, it's a shame, on page 11: "Given the lack of confidence in policies and politicians..."

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

**Mr. Laberge:** ...that has become, with some justification, widespread in North America by refusing to grant one or the other too many powers would appear to be a logical objective". Sovereignty, not because individual rights would no longer be in danger, but according to what we have just said, not federalism either. You would almost agree with me that this would always take some form of minority government, with two or three balances of power somewhere, and we...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Laberge, your time is up. Perhaps you could let Mr. Grey try to answer or comment?

**Mr. Grey:** The first time that I heard you speak was when you sided with the figures of the Conseil du patronat. I ask myself how a representative - I am not taking a rightist or a leftist stand here because that is not what we are here for - I wonder how you can side with, for example, Mr. Bouchard instead of the new Premier of Ontario, if you truly represent your own "parish". I think that we have to...

**Mr. Laberge:** But, even there, come back to earth! You are on another planet. The fact that

I have a friend who is the Premier of Ontario has nothing to do with...

**Mr. Grey:** That's not what I meant.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Laberge and Mr. Grey, you are repeating yourselves. You are repeating yourselves. We have already gone beyond the time allotted. We are about to lose control over this meeting, if we haven't already. It is Mr. Ouellet's turn to speak, and he will be the last. Mr. Ouellet.

**Mr. Larose:** We'll go and vote in Ontario, Louis. We'll go and vote in Ontario!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Please stay, at least until the end of the meeting, Mr. Ouellet.

**Mr. Larose:** Yes, yes.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Ouellet has the floor.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank Mr. Grey and the members of his group for coming here to speak to us this evening. I think that your brief includes an appendix dealing with an economic assessment of Québec's political options which is worth looking at. I do not think that we can share your views. I think that we can contradict you, as Mr. Nicolet has very politely done. But I must say, Mr. Chairman, that I deeply regret the fact that certain people have felt justified in insulting or ridiculing people who were invited here to express their views.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** This Commission has upheld a very open freedom of speech with regard to all opinions with a discipline that has been scrupulously respected by everyone. People who wish to defend individual rights are duty bound to set an example. Continue, Mr. Ouellet.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Mr. Chairman, I think that what we have witnessed here this evening is a disturbing demonstration of intolerance. That is all that I have to say.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** This demonstration of intolerance, I regret to say, comes from those who applaud. This evening, I have personally stretched all of my rules so that everyone can have their say. Now, I am going to allow myself to return to our strict order. The question period for members is now over. Now it is time for the questions of the two parliamen-

tary groups and I give Mr. Rémillard the floor.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, I would like to thank you for agreeing to come and testify before us this evening. You present a point of view that needed to be heard by this Commission, a point of view that I can certainly qualify as original, a point of view that refers to values that respect democracy, a freedom that is at the very basis of our values as a society; a point of view that is essentially articulated in terms of respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. And in this context, Mr. Chairman, I believe that we have to be extremely careful to allow everyone to express their point of view with the greatest of — I will not use the word tolerance because I find it derogatory — but with the greatest openmindedness possible with regard to the opinions of one and all. And it is within this context that I welcome your brief.

I find it deplorable, Mr. Chairman, deplorable, this climate that we are in the process of creating in our society in general, at the level of Québec and also of Canada as a whole, this kind of witch hunt. I am speaking of the references that were made to remarks apparently made by Mr. Donderi, that we can take out of context and accuse of anything at all. I am speaking of Mr. Pallascio, who was also referred to and whose words were taken out of context. I too was a victim of this kind of interpretation at the time of my speech to inaugurate the Commission because I referred to a phrase from the book by Monseigneur Savard **Menaud, maître draveur**, where Menaud talks about a people that does not know how to die. A columnist from a Montréal daily called me xenophobic. Mr. Chairman, it's a shame. And I hope that we will be able to arrive at a climate that is more open and as democratic as possible and that we can eliminate all these kinds of witch hunts coming from both sides. And please, let us get back to the rights and freedoms that we all hold so dearly, regardless of our political views. We are all supporters of a free, democratic society.

Mr. Grey, I have known you for a long time and I know that you are a supporter of these fundamental rights and freedoms. It was even in the name of these fundamental rights and freedoms that you opposed — and I would say fiercely opposed — the Meech Lake Accord. And in your brief when you summarize the current crisis, obviously you bring up this rejection of the Meech Lake Accord, stating that eight provinces were in favour of it. Needless to say — and I would like to emphasize this — you have the honesty to say that the public opinion polls at the time showed very clearly that most Canadians did not want Meech Lake, and I congratulate you. That is very interesting evidence of your honesty.

You then talk about several considerations dealing with fundamental rights and freedoms, and you express an idea that you have mentioned a few times since we began questioning you, the idea that a second level for the judicial control of rights and freedoms is desirable, referring to the Canadian Supreme court in relation to the Québec level.

But my question is this, Mr. Grey: If — and I say if — Québec obtained full autonomy over its affairs, could there not be another level of authority with regard to fundamental rights and freedoms, and I refer to the confederal example that you yourself cited, Europe 22 and the European agreement and the court in Strasbourg? Would this not be as feasible and provide as much protection with regard to fundamental rights and freedoms?

**Mr. Grey:** First of all, I would like to emphasize how much I appreciated your speech because I too am absolutely dead set against witch hunts that can be jumped into so quickly.

The answer, Mr. Rémillard, is yes, we could. We could even join the European agreement and have the Strasbourg court. There is a Canadian judge, Mr. Justice MacDonald, who has presided over this court. Of course this would be feasible, but it makes less sense than continuing on with a situation where there are already judges. We have a basis of common law in public law, a basis of common law in common with the other provinces. It is much more reasonable to have a Canadian Supreme Court. But of course, if you are asking me this theoretically, then "yes" we could belong to the European court or an international court at The Hague or anywhere else, that could have the same effect. But, in this case, sovereignty would no longer be the kind of sovereignty that some are seeking. There would, once again, be a... (technical problem) of sovereignty.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Like the European countries which are sovereign but which — the 22 countries — have nevertheless accepted the European convention, along with the decisions of the court of Strasbourg. But, regarding...

**Mr. Grey:** Except that I think that they are going to become an actual federation within a year. In the end, this is a very good thing.

**Mr. Rémillard:** No, but they are not... they are a confederation, with each country being sovereign.

If you will allow me another question. Regarding the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, in the Canadian Constitution, which you hold so dearly, how can you be so attached to this Charter of Rights and Freedoms that is very accessible for the very poor, those who are eligible for legal aid in other words, and also

very accessible for the very rich, those who can afford \$100 000, \$150 000 or \$200 000 in lawyers' fees, but not to the average citizen? The very, very large majority of Canadians do not have access to this Charter. How can you say that your rights, that the rights of Canadians are protected better by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms? That is an illusion.

Now for the rights of minorities. Section 23, you don't talk about it very much because you, as Anglophones, your rights as minorities were guaranteed, even without the Charter, without section 23. But what about Francophones living outside Québec who have to be counted like sheep to see if there are enough of them to form a big enough herd and who have to go to the Supreme Court every time they want the least little school, to find out if they can administer it? Do you think, Mr. Grey, that this is what respecting fundamental rights and freedoms is about?

**Mr. Grey:** Alright, Mr. Rémillard, my first answer. I am very worried about the fact that the middle classes do not have access to the courts. I can tell you that there are lawyers, I think, like me, in all the provinces, who take cases if they come under the Charter in any way, even if we are not paid what one might expect. But this is a serious problem. With respect to the Québec Charter, with respect to the federal Charter, it is only this legal review that guarantees rights. You are right, however. There is a problem. It is a problem for all bar associations. People must be guaranteed access to justice. I think that everyone should work this out together. It is a concern that I share with you.

Regarding the second problem that you raised, that of section 23, I have a comment to make. You said to me: you, as an Anglophone... This is something that bothers me a little in Québec. What actually makes me an Anglophone in the final analysis? I was nine years old when I arrived here, I learned to speak French and I think that you are satisfied with how I speak it. Why are you always saying: as Anglophones, your rights are protected. I do speak English of course, but I often speak French in my home. Why am I considered one of "you Anglophones"? Mr. Nicolet asked me a question earlier - we want to have a dialogue with you.

**Mr. Rémillard:** O.K. Fine.

**Mr. Grey:** Why am I not considered one of...

**Mr. Rémillard:** All right. I take back what I said. I do not consider you to be an English speaker.

**Mr. Grey:** No, no. But I think that this question where you suggest...

**Mr. Rémillard:** I retract what I said because I don't want to lose the time I have left.

**Mr. Grey:** I want to give you a one-sentence answer to your question all the same. I agree that we need to eliminate the clause "where numbers permit". This is one of the recommendations that we make, that all Francophones everywhere across the country should have an absolute right.

**Mr. Rémillard:** But Mr. Grey, I can only conclude one thing from your words: it is false to say that there is more protection with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms than with the Québec Charter...

**Mr. Grey:** There is more protection with both and, secondly, it is false to say that the Canadian Charter represents the ultimate, the final answer to all human rights problems. There are many of these in Canada, and we haven't finished.

(10:00 p.m.)

**Mr. Rémillard:** But listen, Mr. Grey...

**Mr. Grey:** Both of them are...

**Mr. Rémillard:** Just one thing. You will acknowledge that, if you want to assert a right or freedom under the Québec Charter, you can do so without its costing you a cent, no matter what your income is, by the Commission des droits de la personne. You know it yourself, you have used it for your clients.

**Mr. Grey:** There is also...

**Mr. Rémillard:** But, if you go with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, you go as far as the Supreme Court. There too, obviously, you are familiar with your invoices for fees, as am I.

**Mr. Grey:** Accepted by a commission, we have to be accepted by a commission. There are also federal funds, as you know, that allow people to contest. I would be the first to sign your declaration if it was done in the following way: that at both levels it is essential, and not only at the level of the Charter but other constitutional and non-constitutional rights, it is deplorable that there is not enough access to justice and I would be the first to say that lawyers must...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** It is now Mr. Chevette's turn to speak because we have finished with this series of questions and the Official Opposition party still has about five minutes left. Five or six minutes, Mr. Chevette.

**Mr. Chevette:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. I do not



think that we have any room around this table for lectures... and I am going to defend the elected officers of Québec. Because I read your brief, I read it all the way through - twice. I forgot to read the appendix - I shouldn't have read it. But there is no way that in Québec we are going to let anyone lecture us on intolerance. There are limits to passing us off as something we are not. If there is one tolerant people, in the whole of Canada especially, if there is one tolerant people that has treated its minority properly, that has respected fundamental rights, it is the people of Québec, setting aside a few...

Your disagreement with Bill 101 and your disagreement with Bill 178 do not give you the right, from my point of view, to sit in judgment on the people of Québec and call them intolerant. And this... I fundamentally deplore the very spirit of this text that tries to belittle the abilities of the Québec people, that tries to denigrate and put down Québec, as if we were unable to ensure fundamental rights here in Québec with a constitution and an enshrined charter of rights. I am glad that the Minister said that there is no more protection with the Canadian Charter than with the Québec Charter. That is further confirmation that you make very unwarranted assertions. When you say, for example, things...

You have every right to be a federalist. I respect federalists who are able basically to express their views using arguments based on reason. But when you make such gratuitous assertions, when you say that for years the federal government has been doing all it can for French and English minorities, minorities in the provinces, when we look at the assimilation rate, certain provinces have an assimilation rate of 72% while the average is 35%, it is clear that you don't know what you're talking about. Because respect...

Mr. Grey: Tell me, where exactly did I say that...

Mr. Chevette: Excuse me but I would like to finish. Respect breeds respect. When people say anything they like, they run the risk in a gathering such as ours of being called to order. When they assert anything they like or use scare tactics, I'm sorry but it shows a lack of respect for the collective intelligence of the people of Québec. And that, in my view, is one of the basic mistakes that you made in your brief. You insult the collective intelligence of Quebecers. With your answers you almost go so far as to deprive them of their right to self-determination as a people, saying that it would be submitted to other provinces anyway.

In my opinion, when we aim for "I", when we see how Québec has been welcoming others for many years and then look at your remarks

on immigration, when we look at your remarks on the language, and when we look at your remarks on our chronic inability to do anything, it is degrading and it is not intolerant of me to tell you so. You yourself said that we were all adults here, that we could say anything to each other. Well, I'm telling you: Don't act like this in Québec if you want to help build it. Why don't you try to develop a positive attitude with which we could accomplish things and together we will pull through? On page 22 of your appendix, you declare that it is within federalism that things must be changed, but the whole text before this is about Québec's chronic inability to do anything: the intolerance of Quebecers! A bit more, and we'd be caricatured as nothing more than a bunch of fascists who don't know how to behave in public. I do not accept this and I am not being intolerant by telling you so. In my view, the most intolerant ones are those who do not accept that a majority people can define itself on its own, can have the right to define itself and to look into its future. And I admit that it is not a question of fear. Personally, anyway, I have gotten past that point and I can tell you that, on the contrary, the more you resort to scare tactics, the harder I will fight for the fundamental rights of Quebecers.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Grey, in closing.

Mr. Grey: I think, Mr. Chevette, that you have read things into my brief that were not even there. I think that one thing needs to be said: No people is more or less tolerant than any other, no better or worse. If we do not want to say things that are unfair, we must admit that all groups of individuals that number more than 100, 200 or 300 act in the same manner. I think that it is also intolerant to assert that Quebecers are more generous. I do not understand your assertion regarding collective intelligence - it is beyond me - any more than I would claim that Quebecers are less tolerant, a view that you attributed to me and that I do not hold. I said that all peoples can protect individual rights better if there were a mechanism that goes above the established majorities. That is all that I was saying. If you think that I said that the Québec people are unable to do anything whatsoever, then you are wrong. I did not say anything of the kind. You also used the word "fascist", and someone else used the word "Nazi", but it wasn't me. I said, we said, that the people of Québec, the people of Canada, the Canadian peoples will do better in a Canada with greater powers at both levels. I did not speak on behalf of a centralized Canada and I did not speak on behalf of a centralized Québec, I spoke in favour of a society where powers are divided.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank

you, Mr. Grey. On this tolerant note, which perhaps escapes you, you have benefitted this evening from a right to speak that lasted a half-hour longer than any of the other groups that have participated in these proceedings. I would like to thank you for appearing before us and I now declare the proceedings adjourned.

(End of sitting, 10:08 p.m.)