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On being a Canadian

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Article abstract

Monsieur le sénateur Maurice Lamontagne a prononcé cette conférence à Edmonton, au lendemain des élections du 30 octobre. On y trouvera un point de vue intéressant, exprimé avec une précision de pensée qui n'est pas répandue chez les politiciens. Il est vrai que Monsieur Lamontagne n'a fait qu'un court séjour dans la politique active. Du professorat, il est passé presque tout de suite au Sénat. Il développe ici des idées que tous ne partageront sans doute pas des deux côtés de la barrière. Nous les pensons valabes. Et c'est pourquoi nous apportons son texte à nos lecteurs, confiants qu'il saura leur faire mieux saisir le problème des relations entre francophones et anglophones au Canada. Quand ce ne serait que de rappeler la difficulté des communications entre gens de langue, de formation et d'aspirations différentes... A.

On being a Canadian[1]

by

Senator MAURICE LAMONTAGNE

Monsieur le sénateur Maurice Lamontagne a prononcé cette conférence à Edmonton, au lendemain des élections du 30 octobre. On y trouvera un point de vue intéressant, exprimé avec une précision de pensée qui n'est pas répandue chez les politiciens. Il est vrai que Monsieur Lamontagne n'a fait qu'un court séjour dans la politique active. Du professorat, il est passé presque tout de suite au Sénat. Il développe ici des idées que tous ne partageront sans doute pas des deux côtés de la barrière. Nous les pensons valabes. Et c'est pourquoi nous apportons son texte à nos lecteurs, confiants qu'il saura leur faire mieux saisir le problème des relations entre francophones et anglophones au Canada. Quand ce ne serait que de rappeler la difficulté des communications entre gens de langue, de formation et d'aspirations différentes . . . A.

I do not propose to refer to the specific frustrations that you have here in the West on being Canadians because you know them much better than I do. I wish that more of you could come to the East, particularly in Quebec, to express them. You have certainly learned to speak with one common political voice, at least at the national level, but I am afraid that in my native province, we have not been able yet to understand exactly what it says.

I intend to speak about more general difficulties and, at some length, about the evolution and present state of English-French relations in Canada. Those relations have always been a thorny issue in our country. They will continue to be until better Canadian studies are developed in our secondary schools; without such improved studies the prejudices which have dominated on both sides wil be transferred from one generation to the other.

Confederation was established more than a century ago, but it is still difficult for each of us to function and to live as a Canadian

[1] An address given at the Canada Studies Conference in Edmonton on November 3, 1972.

citizen. And yet, I am deeply convinced that most Canadians do not want to emigrate to another country or to see our nation disintegrate. The reason for that paradox lies in our collective failure to emphasize in our schools, in our political life and through our mass media the numerous *positive* aspects of Canadianism and in our natural inclination to describe Canada as an artificial and even as an abnormal entity.

As a country extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the American border to the Arctic, we are still a very young nation. The United States proclaimed their independence in 1776, almost a century before the Canadian Confederation was born. The settlement of the Canadian Prairies really began only after the closing of the American agricultural frontier. And yet, during that relatively short period, we have achieved one of the highest standards of living in the world. We have developed a fairly effective system of transportation, of communications and of complementary economic relationships. We have enough reserves of natural resources, broadly distributed across the country, to ensure our long-term prosperity, if we exploit them wisely. More recently, we have built a network of national parks and cultural centres which has already substantially improved the quality of our lives.

When we come to think of it, most of us are proud of our international reputation and of our parliamentary institutions. We have developed over the years one of the most flexible and equitable federal system in the world. It could be shown, although we have not tried very hard to establish this fact, that Confederation, as a human institution, has worked relatively well for more than a century. We have the opportunity, although we do not use it very much, to learn two international languages and to have access to the two cultures which have made the greatest contribution to modern Western civilization. In fact, the great number of foreigners who visit us or who come to live with us seem to agree that Canada with her vast potential is and will continue to be one of the best places to be in the world, in spite of our winters. Those are only just a few positive aspects of Canadianism, to which we pay lip-homage occasionally but which are not deeply rooted in our national conscience.

In spite of those achievements and advantages, several obstacles, both physical and psychological, have prevented us from developing a strong and positive Canadianism. Canada is known for her numerous

diversities. She is composed of several linguistic, cultural and racial groups, with widely different backgrounds; furthermore, they immigrated at different stages of our history. For instance, my ancestor came from France in 1665 but many of your fathers probaby were not born in Canada. Quebec City was founded 260 years before Confederation, but in 1867, Edmonton was still a small trading post.

Our population is located in regions with diverging features and interests, which accounts for the strength of regionalism and even provincialism. It is also distributed along a thin long line bordering the most powerful nation in the world today. Communications between us have always been difficult. The similarities and the proximity of adjacent regions on both sides of the so-called invisible border have favoured North-South Canadian-American relations rather than East-West Canadian relations. In addition, we never really had to fight to conquer our political sovereignty or to preserve our territorial integrity, but, in spite of our successive attempts, we did not conquer the geographical distances and the cultural solitudes which separated us.

These are some of the reasons which explain our uneasiness about being Canadians. This feeling is expressed by several typical Canadian attitudes and situations. For instance, the rule of closure, which is a most unusual parliamentary procedure, had to be imposed by the government in 1964 to adopt a genuine Canadian flag. More than a century after Confederation and forty years after the Statute of Westminster, our Head of State lives on another continent. We have not been able yet to agree on a formula to amend our own constitution and we still rely on the British Parliament to do it for us. Many Canadians still regard as an unacceptable political concession the opportunity to learn as a second language one or the other of our two official languages. Some of us are even ready, in our respective regions, to separate from the rest of Canada or to join the United States.

We certainly have not succeeded in developing a strong Canadian identity. In my view, we will continue to fail in this respect until we have recognized and positively dealt with some basic facts of Canadian life. I would like to mention only two here: the American Fact and the French Fact. We have been reluctant to face the American Fact rationally and effectively, because too many of us like it. We have tried to ignore or to oppose the French Fact because too many of

us dislike it. And yet, it seems that these two basic facts of Canadian life are related to each other in several ways. I have often observed that French-speaking separatists are not interested in the greater recognition of the French Fact by the rest of Canada and when they are not marxists, they are not too worried by the American presence in Quebec. French-speaking federalists have a greater fear of American domination and believe that their culture would be better preserved within a stronger Canada, more willing to accept the French Fact. On the other hand, I believe it is equally true to say that English-speaking Canadians who are preoccupied by the growing American influence in our country are more inclined to support a greater recognition of the French Fact throughout Canada, not only as a concession to keep our nation together, but also as a means to strengthen the Canadian identity. Moreover, English-speaking Canadians who welcome the American peaceful invasion tend to reject the French Fact.

As a French-speaking federalist, I am convinced that if Canada is to survive, and to develop her full potentialities, we must reduce the dimensions of the American Fact. In relation to growing demand, experts forecast serious scarcities of raw materials and energy resources in the world in the near future. Those scarcities are already reaching a critical point in the United States. An American scientific group drawn from the prestigious National Research Council, issued a report recently warning that the United States *already* is heavily dependent on foreign raw materials, which will be increasingly depleted or withheld as underdeveloped nations industrialize and compete for their use. The report stated: "One can foresee, within decades... the erosion of United States mining, smelting, refining and mineral-based industries, growing economic colonialism, international frictions, a steadily deteriorating balance of trade, and a tarnished global image of the nation".

Already the United States is importing a large volume of our oil, our natural gas and minerals. Later in this decade, as the report states, the Americans will begin to need all the Canadian resources, including clean water, that they will be able to get. Are we going to succomb to economic colonialism, and allow the rapid and fatal depletion of our children's estate for immediate and marginal gains or are we going to support a new good neighbour policy based on Canadian long term interests ? If we are to follow the latter course, as I hope we will, we shall have to support *together* a strong Canada and to

abandon the *negative* aspects of our regionalisms. Otherwise, we will not have the national cohesiveness necessary to resist further American invasion and assimilation. Today, American scientists are warning us against growing feelings of economic colonialism in the United States. Tomorrow, American political and industrial leaders will impose that satellite status on us, if we continue to cultivate our national inferiority complex and if, as a nation, we remain divided and weak.

As a French-speaking federalist, I also see the extension of the French Fact, both inside and outside Quebec, as an *essential* ingredient of the national effort to *restrict* the American Fact and to develop a strong Canada. There has been real progress in this respect in recent years but this important national issue is far from being solved satisfactorily yet. In order to justify the dual aspect of that observation, I would like now to summarize for you, with my Quebec background, the evolution of English-French relations in Canada and the current stage that they have reached.

Between 1867 and 1960, English-Fench relations have gone through two major periods. The first one extended roughly until the end of World War I and was characterized by open conflict. The second one ended with the rise of the Quiet Revolution in Quebec in 1960 and can be described as the era of co-existence between the two groups.

During the first period, conflicts centered around the Riel incidents, the School question and Canadian participation in so-called imperialistic wars. The school issue which exploded in Manitoba, in New Brunswick, in Ontario and, to a lesser extent, in other provinces, provided the main thread in the series of conflicts.

At the outset, it is true to say that the majority of French-Canadians were deeply attached to the British political institutions and that they had come to prefer Great Britain to France as a colonial power. Even Louis-Joseph Papineau, before he became the leader of The Rebellion of 1837-38 had declared: "My education is more English than French. It is in the writings of the English political philosophers and political leaders that I have studied the British Constitution". Under Cartier's leadership, French-Canadians had genuinely accepted Confederation; but they believed, rightly or wrongly, that the Canadian constitution protected their cultural institutions and their language throughout Canada, as the English language and institutions were

protected in Quebec. With the opening of the West, many French-Canadians began to move to the Prairies, where they sought to obtain recognition of what they considered to be their cultural rights.

However, strong resistance was met. Important groups on the English-speaking side, especially in Ontario, had another interpretation of the Canadian constitution and were firmly opposed to the extension of the French Fact. While they recognized that French had a special status in Quebec, they did not accept that Canada should become a bilingual country. In cultural affairs their attitude was much more influenced by the Americans than by the British. They believed in the melting pot and could hardly understand why another ethnic group refused to give up its culture. They preferred uniformity to diversity and felt that two languages would lead to disunity and confusion rather than be a source of enrichment. Religious differences, especially when they were associated with the French Fact, did not contribute to improve the climate.

Both sides had conflicting objectives. They believed that their respective attitudes were justified. Prejudices were deeply rooted and feelings more often than not dominated the discussion of cultural issues. Conflicts were therefore inevitable. They reached a climax when the Ontario school question and the conscription issue were raised in 1912 and 1917. The French-speaking nationalists and the English-speaking Conservatives made a curious alliance in 1911 to defeat Laurier. But when Mr. Meighen formed his first cabinet in 1920, he found only one French-Canadian — and a senator at that — willing to become a Minister.

When the French-Canadians lost the battle on the school question in Manitoba, they began to emigrate more massively to the United States as economic stagnation continued to prevail in Quebec. Throughout that period, they felt that they had been defeated on each major issue. They realized that the extension of the French Fact across Canada had been curbed. As a result, the Quebec reserve had been created.

The second period began after World War I. Following the creation of the Quebec reserve, relations between Quebec and the rest of Canada were reduced to a minimum. No major conflict arose. Mere co-existence became the "modus vivendi" by mutual consent.

A kind of "iron curtain" had been drawn and few people on either side really tried to remove it.

English-speaking Canadians had succeeded in containing the "minority" problem. Quebec became for them a "mystery" which they were not trying very hard to understand. Of course, they did not completely ignore the French-Canadians. They wanted, for instance, to have a few representatives of the minority to participate in "national" organizations or to report on the state and evolution of French Canada, as if that strange population had lived in Africa. Acceptable types of French-Canadians became available to perform those functions but they were viewed by many people in Quebec as traitors or "fellow travellers" rather than as ambassadors.

A great number of French-Canadians, inspired by l'abbé Groulx and others, were also satisfied with co-existence. Frustrated and disillusioned because what they considered to have been their rights had been denied, they decided to confine themselves within their Quebec stronghold and fight for provincial autonomy which they viewed as the only way to preserve and strengthen their culture and their institutions. At first, the Quebec reserve may have been imposed by the leaders of English-speaking Canada. It soon appeared to the "nationalist" leaders of French Canada as a necessity.

During the period of conflicts, they had condemned the federal government for its failure to defend successfully the French Fact. During the period of co-existence, they began to see it merely as a "foreign" government dominated by English-speaking Canadians. French-Canadians were advised very strongly not to become federal civil servants, because they would not be in a position to exercise any real influence in Ottawa; they would not be able to use their own language in their daily work and they would be lost, for all practical purposes, to the Quebec cause. French-Canadian leaders had come to the conclusion that the English-speaking group would never accept French cultural expansion outside Quebec, and that there was no real purpose in maintaining relations with that group under such terms.

Thus, mere co-existence between the two groups had become a way of life accepted by both sides. Between the two World Wars, the fundamental weakness of that regime — which was to leave provincial autonomy and isolationism as unchallenged dogmas in Que-

bec — did not appear to create any real problem. This important implication of co-existence became suddenly evident, however, when the conscription issue was raised again in 1943, and when the opposition between the two groups was revived mainly on the basis of old prejudices.

The weakness of co-existence re-appeared during the post-war period, when it was felt that major problems, like economic instability and social insecurity, required federal intervention and the return of the central government to a dominant position within the Canadian federal system. That new orientation met with systematic opposition from Quebec. Of course, Quebec was not the only province to fear the new trend toward centralization, but its opposition was often singled out across Canada. Most English-speaking leaders wanted to build a strong nation in their own way but suddenly they had to face the French Fact, which they had almost forgotten. In their surprise, they were asking why Quebec was refusing to participate in the new national movement. Why was that province making it difficult for the rest of the country to achieve its new objectives? Why French-Canadians had not become real Canadians after all those years since 1867?

It is interesting to note that most French-Canadian leaders had raised similar questions during the period of conflicts, when they met the strong opposition of important English-speaking groups to what they thought had been agreed upon in 1867. For instance, they did not understand how Sir John A. Macdonald could say in 1891: "A British subject I was born; a British subject I will die . . . I appeal . . . to the men who have trusted me in the past . . . to give me their united and strenuous aid in this my last effort for the unity of the Empire . . ." And yet, this election manifesto added to Riel's hanging, did not produce a significant Quebec backlash. During the period of conflicts English-speaking Canada has been the stumbling-block which had prevented French-Canadians from attaining their goal of cultural expansion across the country. Towards the end of the period of co-existence, Quebec had become the focal point of resistance to the postwar objectives of English-speaking Canada. That second period showed us, I believe, that mere co-existence is compatible only with economic and political regionalisms, which can more or less ignore each other, but that it is clearly inconsistent with the building of a

strong nation with a strong central government. Then, it leads inevitably to a deadlock, if not to worse.

With the 1960s, a new period began in the evolution of English-French relations in Canada. I do not propose to describe the roots and the content of the Quiet Revolution in Quebec, which appeared suddenly, at the political level, in 1960. I merely want to point out that it unleashed important new forces which gave the impression in English-speaking Canada that Quebec had to last and suddenly joined the 20th century. The familiar and comforting image of a so-called backward, priest-ridden and rural society had to be dismissed. French-Canadians could not anymore be taken for granted and forgotten. A surprise, and puzzled English-speaking Canada, still looking at Quebec as a "mystery", began to ask the question: what does Quebec want ? Most of the answers coming from French-Canadians were confusing at first. They ranged from separatism, associate states, special status, to positive provincial autonomy with greater French-Canadian participation in a stronger Canada.

But one of those answers at least, was clear and unanimous: the new generations, much better prepared than their predecessors to play an active role in a modern society, wanted to assert themselves and to participate in the leadership more significantly, including that of the business world which had been left to English-speaking Canadians or to the Americans even in Quebec. Under the auspices of the Quiet Revolution, those new generations had gained a new sense of pride and a new confidence in themselves.

The confusion of the early 1960s has been gradually clearing up. In recent years, two more definite trends have emerged and are represented by two bitterly opposing groups. They agree only on one goal: to put an end to co-existence. On one side, there is the separatist movement. This group wants to achieve that objective by obtaining full political recognition for the Quebec reserve. It is divided between the extreme left and more moderate elements. It gets its support mainly from some elements of the elites and from students; it has failed for the time being, to develop strong popular roots. The average citizen who votes for the Parti Québecois is more attracted by René Lévesque than by separatism.

The second group wants to return to the objectives that their forefathers had in mind immediately after Confederation and to make

another attempt at closer integration between Quebec and the rest of Canada. Mr. Louis St. Laurent, when he was still Prime Minister of Canada, began to develop the new deal, in a speech made in November 1956, as he formulated for the first time in our history the elements of a systematic cultural policy at the federal level. He stated on that occasion.

"We live to a large extent under a regime of cultural co-existence... in other words our country is constituted of several cultural regions which do not maintain enough relations beween themselves and which are too exclusively submitted to common external influences. It is not only undesirable but impossible to have only one culture in Canada. Any attempt in that direction would fail and endanger national unity. Canada will have reached an important stage in its development as a nation when all Canadians will be convinced that their country cannot be united and maintain itself as an entity distinct from others without cultural diversity. As soon as we will have understood that truth which appears so clearly throughout our history our different cultural groups . . . will strive to improve their own cultural life and to assimilate what is good in other cultures and compatible with theirs. When we will have acquired that mentality and attitude, we will have accomplished a great step toward national unity."

The same theme was developed by Mr. Jean Lesage, when he spoke to a federal-provincial confederation in July 1960, in his capacity as the newly elected Premier of Quebec. He then said:

. . . "We have no intention of keeping ourselves in isolation, which would be both unrealistic for any province and harmful to the whole country.

"In the cultural field our principal objective is to work vigorously towards the continuing development of French Canadian culture while fully guaranteeing the cultural rights of our minorities whose contribution we appreciate at its full value. It is our wish that our culture in its development may have its full place throughout Canada. We believe that the French speaking Canadians have an essential contribution to make to Canadian life, even if it were only to help avoid the threat of American cultural dominance. We do not seek to impose this contribution; we wish rather to offer it to the rest of the country in the firm hope that it will be accepted so that our two main cultures may be able to meet in harmony and not in conflict".

The attitude taken by two prominent Quebec leaders pointed to a new era. The present French-Canadian representatives of the movement for closer integration accept a strong federal leadership but with greater Quebec participation. They want a broader recognition of the French Fact not only in the federal civil service but also, in varying degrees, of course in other areas of our country. They still favour a strong provincial government as a protection, but under conditions that should be extended to *all* provinces and not in the form of a special status for Quebec. The great majority of the Quebec population still belongs to that second group.

Until recently, there was good reason to believe that the objectives and aspirations of that group were accepted by a growing number of English-speaking Canadians. That greater acceptance was symbolized by the support given in 1969 to the Official Languages Act by the four Canadian political parties. Such unanimity would have been impossible in 1960. Since then, the bilingual character of the federal civil service and of the national capital has improved gradually. An increasing number of French-Canadians have joined the public service where they began to play a more significant role. The French Fact has been getting greater recognition in several provinces. All these major events indicate that a new era of closer integration had begun in Canada, following the period of conflicts and the stage of co-existence.

In spite of those improvements, many of us were realistic enough to recognize that this old issue had not yet been solved. To paraphrase Churchill, one could say that it was perhaps the end of the beginning; but it was not yet the beginning of the end. The separatists in Quebec claimed that what was being done was "too little, too late". A few English-speaking Canadians were prepared to accept the separation of Quebec in order to eradicate the French Fact, but they did not realize that as a result of separation Quebec would be a long "Polish Corridor" to cross, and that the rest of Canada would soon cease to be a viable entity. Some others denounced "French Power" in Ottawa and feared for their jobs. They tended to forget that last year, French Canadians held only 88 of the top 610 positions in the federal public service. Thus, because of growing impatience on one side, and increasing resistance on the other, this third stage in English-French relations may prove to be of short duration.

I want to emphasize that the result of the recent election cannot be explained by a single factor. Nobody can deny, however, that anti-Quebec and anti-French feelings had something to do with it in many areas of the country. Rightly or wrongly, this is the prevailing view in Quebec. It is too early yet to determine what will be the final outcome of the new situation. One thing is clear for the time being at least, French-Canadian influence in Ottawa has been curbed again. This represents a real victory only for the extremists on both sides — the separatists in Quebec, who have been claiming that the extension of the French Fact in the rest of Canada was not possible nor even desirable; and the English-speaking separatists who have always pretended that the French-Canadians were a vanquished people with no special rights outside of their own reserve.

Important questions remain to be answered. Will the leaders of the French-Canadian federalists have the patience and the strength to continue to fight on two fronts, when they have just lost on one and when, as a consequence they see their position weakened on the other ? If they decide to stay, what hope do they have to overcome in the near future their recent set-back in English-speaking Canada ? Will they be able to preserve their credibility in Quebec ? If they decide to abandon the fight or if they are forced to give up, will there be to-morrow another generation of French-Canadian federalist leaders prepared and ready to assume the succession even if they are reasonably sure that they, like their predecessors, will fail in their mission ? Will they be taken seriously in Quebec and be able to establish a solid basis in that province ? For the moment, at least, I am tempted to answer to all those questions in the negative, and to repeat what Allan Paton said in anguish about South Africa, his native land: "Cry, The Beloved Country".

It is obvious that our approach to Canadian unity has not worked. We have attempted to build it too much from the top at the level of the so-called Establishment and as a rational and abstract concept. Meanwhile, at the bottom or in the invisible part of the iceberg, we have let prejudices, ignorance and antagonistic emotions dominate English-French relations. We have not really tried to fight them at the proper time when they begin to appear in the early life of individuals. As a result, they were transferred from one generation to the other and they re-appeared at the surface when irresponsible Canadians had the opportunity to exploit them.

Psychologists have shown that racial, ethnic or religious prejudices are often the result of transfers of inadequacies which affect the personality of individuals. In the life of most human beings, there is something or someone interfering with the satisfaction of their desires. This frustration is usually caused by persons close to the individual and frequently generates anxiety or hate. Sometimes this hostility is expressed against these persons but since it is not allowed by our code of ethics, it is often repressed and more or less unconsciously discharged against institutions or groups designated impersonally as "it" or "they".

Modern psychology has also shown that when the hatred is thus transferred, the personality of the prejudiced individual is protected against anxiety because of his belief that all, or almost all the people in his family, his group, or his institution feel exactly the same way that he does. Such feelings of hostility, therefore, actually contribute to his security because they develop his sense of identity, of belonging to the group. If he can be a little more outspoken, a little more impassioned and bitter in his attitudes than the rest of his group, he may even develop some feeling of special status and prestige. Such emotions then, do not seem to the person to be irrational or unusual but positively virtuous. Since the prejudiced person feels hostile toward a certain group, he begins to believe that the members of that group must also feel hostile towards him. In fact, the more he thinks (or rather feels) about it, the more sure he is that this hated group is not only hostile, but really dangerous. Then his own hostility assumes a virtuous flavour. It is a plain case of protecting one's family, one's rights, one's religion from the threatening and aggressive outsider.

Those feelings of hate and fear are very difficult to maintain with respect to an object, group or person whom one really knows. So we find that the prejudiced person meticulously, if unwittingly, maintains his ignorance with respect to anything which might make the object seem human, or nearly so. There are blind spots in his mental make-up which make it impossible for him to see the whole picture without distortion. In addition to blocking out what is good or valuable about this object, there is a selective high-lighting of everything that is bad, or that contributes to its potential danger.

The anatomy of prejudices provided by modern psychology shows that ethnic and similar prejudices will be a threat to national unity

as long as the hostility and anxieties that most people feel in their daily lives are allowed to be discharged against institutions or groups. It is also important to note that those transfers usually take place during the period of adolescence and are made possible by maintaining ignorance with respect to those institutions or groups.

The usual timing of that guilt transfer process clearly indicates the determining influence that Canadian studies in secondary schools have on the attitudes of people. Biased or even inadequate Canadian studies can facilitate that transfer process by a selective high-lighting of everything that is bad about other institutions or groups or simply by maintaining ignorance with respect to anything which might make them seem human. Such studies can distort the outlook of young people for their entire life and produce prejudiced Canadian citizens. The teaching of history, for instance, can easily lead to such tragic results.

On the other hand, good Canadian studies in secondary schools can prevent this guilt transfer process by fighting ignorance with objectivity, by presenting the whole picture without distortion. Such studies can make a tremendous contribution to the development of fully functioning Canadian citizens. I will give you only one example to illustrate what I mean. Young French Canadians have been told by their own teachers that they belonged to a people which had been vanquished in 1760. This is enough, of course, to give them an inferiority complex and a feeling of hostility toward the English. They might develop another attitude if they were told what really happened between 1756 and 1763, that it was France which was defeated by Great Britain and that the Conquest would not have taken place, at least in 1760, if France had insisted on keeping Canada rather than Guadeloupe when the Treaty of Paris was negotiated.

The substantial contribution that objective Canadian studies can make to the development of a healthy Canadianism shows the tremendous responsibilities that teachers have in secondary schools. Can we say that young Canadians really know their common heritage? Are they being told in Quebec that the so-called Protestant bloc is even less homogeneous than the so-called Catholic bloc? Are they being shown in English-speaking Canada that if one looks closer at the hitherto over-simplified French-Canadian society one discovers the same diversity of social groups, of life patterns and of outlooks

that are to be found within the English-Canadian society, except that immigration had a lesser impact in Quebec ?

Of course we have our differences. But we do not realize enough that life would be terribly dull if we were all alike. We tend to see our diversities too much as a source of disunity and not enough as an opportunity for cultural enrichment. Instead of fighting each other, we should fight together our respective prejudices and our useless fears. I sincerely hope that Project Canada West will make a worthwhile contribution to that fight, and thus help the Canada Studies Foundation attain its objective. There is no more effective way, in my view of developing better Canadian citizens than to encourage teachers and students in secondary schools to work together and improve the quality of Canadian studies across Canada.

I agree that this is at best, a long-term approach; but at least, it has the merit of getting at the roots of the problem, and of gradually establishing a more solid foundation for national unity. Meanwhile, we must collectively recognize that English-French relations in Canada have reached a new impasse, not to say a new state of crisis. I am deeply convinced that we will not return to a long period of conflicts or to a situation of mere co-existence. The choice now before us is closer integration on the basis of mutual compromises and better understanding or separation. And we have not many years to make that choice. I am fully aware, as I hope most of you are, of the most unfortunate consequences that separation would have not only for Quebec but also for the rest of Canada. But the history of the world shows that reason does not always prevail in human affairs and that often prejudices and emotions lead to solutions of despair. I believe that in the immediate future, the choice lies to a very large extent with English-speaking Canadians. Do they want to build a stronger Canada with greater French-Canadian recognition and participation, or are they prepared to let our country be destroyed by extremism ? In my view *that* is the question !