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Article abstract

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NATION, STATE AND TERRITORIAL UNITY: A TRANS-OUTAOUAIS VIEW

by

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ABSTRACT

The concept of "nation" is currently being applied on more than one level. Whereas many Québécois maintain that a nation should be a state, world experience shows many nations as forming constituent parts of larger-scaled nations. Sovereignty must be seen as having priority over "association". A secession of Québec would split Canada into at least three portions, and would cause a reorientation of the remnant pieces away from the centre. Several potential boundary problems would exist. The recent development of a Canadian nationalism should not be overlooked.

KEY WORDS: Political Geography, Nation, Nationalism, State, Sovereignty, Separation, Canada, Québec.

RÉSUMÉ

Andrew F. BURGHARDT : Nation, État et unité territoriale : une vue d'outre-Outaouais.

Le concept de « nation » est couramment utilisé selon plusieurs sens. Alors qu'un certain nombre de Québécois soutiennent qu'une nation doit être un État, il existe dans le monde des nations constituantes de plus grandes nations. La souveraineté doit avoir priorité sur l'association. Une sécession du Québec diviserait le Canada en trois parties au moins et entraînerait leur réorientation à l'opposé du centre. Il y aurait des problèmes éventuels de frontière. Le réveil du nationalisme canadien doit retenir l'attention.

MOTS-CLÉS : Géographie politique, nation, nationalisme, État, souveraineté, séparatisme, Canada, Québec.

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No resident of Canada can claim to be completely objective in discussing *la problématique géo-politique du Québec*. All he can hope to do is try to be honest in his approach and fair in his judgements. In my case, I can scarcely claim to speak for a consensus of Ontario opinion, much less for that of all of Canada outside Québec. In this essay I will present an assessment of the situation, which, though strongly personal, still represents a thoughtful view "from the outside."

At the beginning, it is essential to stress the importance of the writer's geographic stance. Where one stands, the place from which one views the situation, makes a great difference in Canada. The Québécois' tendency to equate Ottawa and Canada is much too simplistic. Even if we lack many of the regional particularisms of Europe, we have perhaps even more a sense of distance. Our attention and interest suffer a marked "distance decay". It is well known that the major regions of Canada view the Québec situation differently; even within The Prairies, Alberta sees the matter differently than does Manitoba.

The relative disinterest of the Western provinces is a result not only of distance, but also of a sense of increasing power, and of a shifting external focus. The natural wealth of the area has bred a feeling of self-sufficiency which has inevitably tended to loosen the old feelings of dependency on the East. The growth of the Pacific trading realm has moved attention increasingly away from Europe and its Eastern Canadian intermediaries. The strong American presence in Calgary has accentuated North-South ties at the expense of the historic ties built with Montréal by the C.P.R. To the Canadians of the West, Québécois aspirations tend to seem both distant and presumptuous.

In Southern Ontario, it matters considerably where one lives in relation to Toronto. The industrial concentration West of Toronto has its world-view so concentrated upon itself and on Toronto, the acknowledged leader, that it tends to see Canada as itself enlarged. From the vantage point of Hamilton, it is surprising how distant Québec seems to be. To be honest, Cornwall and Brockville can seem equally remote. It is as if our terrestrial consciousness were bound in by Oshawa, Barrie, and Windsor, with all other areas, although known to exist, being psychologically at a distance. Despite its special contacts with Montréal and Ottawa, Toronto also operates with a strong local fixation. With the typical arrogance of a primate city, Toronto scarcely seems to admit the existence of any cultural vitality in the other cities of Southern Ontario. East of Toronto the matter is different, of course; Québec is seen as close at hand and significant.

As a resident of Hamilton I cannot help but have a view of Québec which is partially obstructed by the presence of Toronto. But I intend to examine the question as a citizen who is vitally concerned with the issues involved. I will not deal with the confused matter of economic costs to Québec in case of separation, nor with the matter of reimbursements for Federal properties. Nor will I try to deal with the thorny questions of shared costs and responsibilities in the case of sovereignty-association. I will, however, try to be frank. Much of the material may be speculative but I feel that the contingencies of the future must be faced if man is not to advance blindly into that future.

NATION AND STATE

It has been my experience that Québécois and others often argue past each other. Whenever the question of Québec's status arises, the Québécois stress the cultural and political elements of the situation, whereas the Anglophones usually stress the economic elements. The former tend to be ideological and emphasize the rights of "the nation"; the latter tend to be pragmatic and emphasize the importance of jobs and industrial develop-

ment. Each faction proves its point and becomes exasperated at the other's failure to understand and accept what seems obvious.

Perhaps more serious have been the implicit disagreements over the meaning and significance of "nation", and of its relation to "state". Confusion concerning "nation" has plagued Canadian political parties in recent years. Well remembered is the "two nations" concept which caused a minor split in the Progressive Conservative Party a decade ago. The issue arose again in the election campaign Debate of the leaders in May, 1979. Two important questions need to be examined: 1. what is included in the definition of "nation"?; is full political sovereignty necessarily included?; and 2. need the concept be limited to a single political level?

Definitions of "nation" vary according to language, discipline, and person. Quite clearly, however, a nation is a cultural entity. A sufficiently large group of people share in common a number of traits, attitudes, and memories, which they feel to be of vital importance. These people feel the existence of a bond which unites them, and sets them off from other groups of people, other "nations", nearby. In this century, the most notable common characteristic has been a shared language, since language is the vehicle for transmitting and sharing national literature, plans, and interpretations of history². To be most effective, the language should be set off sharply from neighbouring language groups; frequently language divisions serve also as nation divisions.

Religion is also a notable ingredient of nationhood. In our secularist age, church-going may not be an impressive statistic, but the underlying premises, temperaments, and lifestyles of a faith-system remain in a people long after church attendance may have dwindled. Religion may serve as a vital foundation for a nation even after the language has been eroded away, as in Scotland and Ireland³.

A sense of common history is also very important. History is man's ordering of the myriad events of the past. It is man who categorizes, classifies, and gives meaning to selected happenings. If separation from the United States were the *sine qua non* of Canadian history, then Québec 1775 would be considered to be more important than Québec 1759, and Lundy's Lane more important than Louisbourg. History becomes important when a large group of people share in a reconstruction of the past which seems, to them, to set them off sharply from peoples nearby.

The emotional impact of a commonly-accepted history is accentuated by the memories of a distinct, preferably independent, past. Thus the Habsburgs of Austria were faced not only with Magyar, Czech, and Croatia cultural movements, but also with nationalisms based on vivid memories of the Kingdoms of Hungary, Bohemia, and Croatia. Such memories are important because they suggest strongly the *right* to local control of the territory concerned, the *ability* of these people to govern themselves once again, and the fact that independence would represent a *restitution* of the lost right to rule.

These memories must include a well-defined territory. A "homeland" is an absolute necessity⁴, and its bounds should be capable of sharp definition. If the territorial limits coincide with a set of functioning political units, the national feeling will tend to be enhanced, in that the limits supply a clear frame for the group spatial perception. Thus the desire for autonomy is easier to express and implement for the Catalans and Corsicans than it is for the Basques or Bretons.

There is thus the tendency for aspiring nations to make use of the concreteness of defined territories in preference to the vagueness of cultural distributions. At least until now, the separatist Québécois have made the existing provincial boundaries the frame of

their aspirations, and have not paid serious attention to the question of linguistic distribution along and near the boundaries.

With a clearly-defined territory and an internalized cultural unity, a sense of nation may grow strong. If it does, does this unity of group and land require full political expression as well? Certainly some measure of autonomy appears to be desirable. Even if alien rulers were so wise and appreciative as to nurture and develop the culture, the members of the nation would still wish to possess enough power to assure the continuance of the group. During the first half of this century the nation-state became the political ideal of the European world, and many political scientists seem to assume that true nationhood requires full sovereignty⁵. On the other hand, most multi-cultural states of the world (and there are many of them) have refused to accept this severely disruptive ideological position, and have preferred autonomy, or less, to the granting of sovereignty.

If the Québécois wish to consider themselves as forming a nation in the cultural sense of the word, most Canadians would, I believe, accept that position. Lord Durham's celebrated statement of two nations in one bosom is well known, and many Anglophones appreciate and treasure the differences between the "two founding peoples." Whether accepting the Québécois as a nation gives us *two* nations is another matter. The differences among the Atlantic provinces, Southern Ontario, the West, and the North seem to be great enough to make the existence of *one* Anglophone nation highly questionable.

Most definitions presuppose that the nation exists at only one level, and that that level is an ultimate, superseded only by concepts such as "humanity". This is probably the reason why the feeling is so strong that a nation should also be a state, and vice versa. In fact we normally allude to relations beyond the state level as being international, not inter-state, and the world's forum refers to itself as The United Nations, and not the United-States, which would be more accurate, though confusing.

This equation of nation and state flies in the face of present human experience. In Spain, Yugoslavia, the United Kingdom (itself an instructive name!), and many of the new states of Africa and Asia, the nations or their equivalents are generally allowed to develop their cultural identities, but at the same time are expected to conform to the overall, unifying regime. This conformity is based upon the possibility of a sense of kinship to some larger social entity, beyond that of the cultural "nation".

What is developing in the world today is an extension of the concept of nation beyond its strict unilevelled application, to a dual-levelled application. In this century, the great experiment has been taking place in Yugoslavia, where, it is hoped, with the passage of sufficient time, the Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, and Macedonians, while still certain of their national identities, will nevertheless adopt also a sense of Yugoslavian nationhood. Individuals would be members of two nations at once, but at separate levels and with no inherent conflict between the two levels. Of longer duration has been the British experience. The existence of English, Scottish, and Welsh nations is rarely disputed, at least in the cultural sense, and yet all are commonly included in the concept of a British nation.

This development has obvious ramifications for Canada. There is in Canada a strong conviction that while the Québécois "nation" should be granted all reasonable means to safeguard, foster, develop, and express its national uniqueness, it should also join in with the other "nation" or "nations" of Canada to develop an overriding sense of Canadian nation-hood.

For a group to limit itself to the tight unilevelled nation-state concept is anachronistic, constraining, and perhaps somewhat ingrown. For Québec to try to draw an international

boundary around itself would be a retreat to the principles which shattered Central Europe in 1918. Events since that date have proven the bankruptcy of the idea of every ethnic nation forming its own state. Interestingly, Western Europe appears to be moving even further, perhaps toward the national concept on three levels. While small groups, such as the Bretons and Welsh, press for autonomy on a local scale, the established state organizations continue, and beyond that a common European consciousness seems to be slowly growing. Thus, in the near future an individual could feel himself to be concurrently a member of the Welsh nation, the British nation, and a new European nation. If the latter seems far-fetched, one may point out that the E.E.C. is working steadily towards a shared consciousness of common European cultural background, towards a common economic organization, common planning for the future, and even a common parliament; the three principal languages are widely shared. Over time, should these not produce a new sense of national kinship beyond the range of the present state?

This concept of a two-tiered definition of a nation, that is of nations within and part of larger-scaled nations, must be understood as forming the ideological basis for the continuance of that maddening question, "What does Quebec want?" Although the persistence of the question annoys Francophones, it represents the continuance of a sense of incomprehension and exasperation on the part of the Anglophones⁶. The latter are convinced that, as a province, Québec already possesses powers sufficient to ensure the survival and flowering of the Québécois national culture. The typical Anglophone does not see anything particularly sacred in the lower-level nation. He sees no inherent reason why a cultural society should automatically become an independent political state. The provincial government already possesses control over education (the principal base of nationalism) and considerable influence on the economy and use of language. Since cultural survival seems assured, what more is necessary? Why should the higher-level national identity and integrity be endangered for no apparent good reason?

For the Québécois, however, provincial status is itself galling. The question is not so much one of power as of "dignity"⁷. In as much as it is the homeland of one of the "two founding peoples", Québec cannot allow itself to be considered to be no more than the equal of nine other units of the same rank. Québec is not a province like the others. The arithmetic is itself felt to be a danger and a denigration. At the least Québec must be the equal of the nine others combined. Herein lie the roots of the dream of "sovereignty-association": a union of two partners equal in power: Québec and Ottawa on a par. Québec is not a province like the others; national feeling suggests that it should not be a province at all.

In addition, there is the example set by a host of new African and Caribbean states, which have achieved at least a formal sovereignty out of the colonial structure of the British Empire. The comparison of the province to these "states" is annoying to all who feel that national self-determination necessitates full political expression. Whether or not these poor states have gained much from their "sovereignty" is rarely discussed; the outward show of independence is the annoying fact. Independence seems to represent that ultimate concreteness, that doing away with constraints, which nationalists find highly appealing.

Particularly for university students, gaining independence means becoming a man among men, the equal of the rulers of the world. They would be masters in their own house. A seat in the United Nations, embassies in the great capitals (expensive, alas!), the freedom to negotiate with GATT, or perhaps NATO, a distinct passport—these are heady attractions indeed. Surely a nation deserves all these. If small islands can possess all

such trappings of power and international recognition, why not a sophisticated, modern industrial nation of six million?

The very existence of an international forum, called *The United Nations*, has exerted a major attraction on the world's peoples. In the early years of this century many cultural groups were content, even proud, to be within the great imperial structures of the time. Their status was gained through membership and participation inside a recognized world power. The advent of the UN helped destroy the old system; it brought the promise of world recognition for every state, and hence has led to the multiplication of make-believe states composed of would-be nations. Membership in the UN means playing in the Major Leagues, and just as the sports leagues have expanded to include teams from every viable city, so the UN has expanded its embrace to include almost all possible countries. Who will be satisfied with mere internal politics when the rostrum of the General Assembly beckons?

Beneath these positive attractions, lies the unacknowledged sweetness experienced by every rising underdog, whether it be the Flemish against the French of Belgium or the French against the English of Canada. A vendetta against the past can be safely waged, now that it is no longer necessary to do so.

TERRITORIAL CONSEQUENCES

Questions of nation, state, and sovereignty could conceivably be little more than irritants, were it not for the fact that Québec is imbedded by geography in the centre of Canadian life. Setting aside emotional responses for the moment, one could conceive of an easy and amicable separation were the remainder of Canada not to be severely, adversely affected. But in this case a friendly divorce of the two actors, each set on doing his/her own thing, is not possible. Despite all acrimony, the marriage has not been sterile. The original union of Canada East and Canada West has led to the incorporation and organization of areas east, west, and north. Historically as well as locationally, Québec lies at the heart of this growth.

The most obvious physical results of a secession of Québec would be the separation of the Atlantic provinces from the remainder of Canada, and the separation of Ontario from the Atlantic Ocean. Both the fragmentation, and the loss of direct access to the sea are very serious matters, so serious in fact that it is hard to conceive of any other state in the world considering such a possibility calmly.

For the Parti Québécois "sovereignty" clearly has a higher priority than "association". The latter is seen primarily as a means of making the former palatable and operable. Independence is the core, the essence, of the P.Q. platform. It is thus no injustice to Québec to state that "association", or co-operation could not be relied upon to maintain securely and without hindrances, the land transport connections between Ontario, and New Brunswick and Labrador. If Québec is to be *sovereign*, her sovereignty must include control over her own transport systems. These systems will be operated for the benefit of the people and economy of Québec. This is obvious and just, and hence internal connections will always have priority over those external ties which are not felt to be necessary, or which are primarily for the benefit of an external state. It is common knowledge that local roads tend to stub end at boundaries, and that even the international truck lines tend to decline in carrying capacity close to boundaries. If Québec were to follow the normal model, one could expect excellent highways from Montréal to Québec, good roads from Québec to Rivière du Loup, and poor connections from Rivière du Loup into New Brunswick.

Even if no hindrances to through traffic developed, the psychological impact of the separation would remain. Territorial integrity, a land continuity from one shore to the other, is vital to the national self-image. Even if co-operation across intervening territory is proven pragmatically to be operable, the psychological sense of rupture will remain.

The Polish Corridor, although an extreme case, is nevertheless an instructive example. President Woodrow Wilson, in his Fourteen Points, made explicit the need for Poland to have a safe and secure outlet to the sea. He recognized that, to be truly independent, Poland could not depend on German ports for its foreign ties. Unfortunately, the creation of the corridor required the separation of East Prussia from the remainder of Germany, and this separation was announced blatantly on every map of Europe. Even though Poland was the weaker state, obviously no physical threat to Germany, and allowed unobstructed movement across the corridor, the Germans found it extremely difficult to accept the cutting away of a portion of their territory. It is well known what capital Hitler made of this feeling of outrage. Germany had been *geteilt* and had to be territorially reunited.

It would be a mistake to attribute such feelings only to the Nazi aberration. All nations are repelled by a separation of territory, particularly one imposed *a posteriori*. We do tend to envisage the world in terms of shapes. Our country, and our provinces are commonly depicted in newspapers and on television by their shapes, their outlines. A Canada with outlying pieces (Labrador would also appear to be a disconnected fragment), with a void where Québec used to be, would scarcely be acceptable.

The sense of separation would be felt most extremely by the residents of the severed pieces. A feeling of isolation would be inevitable. The people of the Maritimes might continue to maintain their loyalty to Canada, but they could not help but feel themselves to be totally removed from the decision-making centres. To use a contemporary image, they would resemble those second-class delegates who watch proceedings over closed-circuit T.V., while the delegates with power and influence are participating actively in the main meeting hall.

Under the circumstances, it implies no disloyalty to suggest that the Atlantic Provinces—or the Maritimes without Newfoundland-Labrador—could be motivated to seek their own political destiny⁸. One Québec author even suggested a confederation of the East, as well as a confederation of the West⁹. Certainly, the Eastern peoples already possess their own history, outlook, and way-of-life, which are distinct from those of Ontario or the Western provinces. Their sense of localism and regionalism are virtually as strong as those of Québec. All that is wanting is internal unity and a sufficient economy; gas and oil could supply the latter. One could then easily envisage the Atlantic provinces acting as free trade ports and fuel suppliers for much of Eastern North America. All this is highly speculative, of course, but the conditions for an attempt to seek their own destiny are not hypothetical.

The St. Lawrence Seaway bears the potentialities of future problems. The entrance into the Seaway proper, the St. Lambert lock, as well as the locks at Beauharnois and Valleyfield, are within Québec, but it is important to note that the St. Lambert lock is above the port of Montréal. The ocean-going vessels which enter the Great Lakes are by-passing Montréal, Québec City, and Sorel. The Seaway profits Québec in two ways: by allowing the movement of Québec ores to the iron and steel plants on the Lakes, and the transshipment of grains and other goods from the "Lakers" to the "Salties". In tonnage, the first of these is now by far the more important, but the latter may have the greater promise for the future as more and more ocean-going vessels become too large to squeeze into the Seaway locks.

Because of the importance of the Seaway to the United States and to Ontario, the maintenance of the system would undoubtedly be guaranteed by treaty, regardless of the status of Québec and Canada. However, in this age of continually changing technology, maintenance is not enough. Expensive improvements and enlargements quickly become advisable or even necessary. The central portion of the Welland Canal has already been replaced, and plans to further modernize the main series of locks have been articulated. Any proposals to enlarge or modernize the lower Seaway would necessarily include Québec, which would thus be placed in the uncomfortable position of being asked to participate in the improvement of a system designed to divert water trade away from its own ports. Without imputing any ill motives, one can assume that sovereign Québec would be strongly tempted to invest in its own ports, rather than in a means of easing ocean-going ships into the Great Lakes. Ontario, on the other hand, would of course suffer the insecurity of being dependent upon an unenthusiastic Québec for the maintenance of its water connections with the Atlantic.

In a recent geography class composed mostly of honours students, the students were asked to deal with the question of Québec-Canadian boundaries, assuming a secession of Québec from the Federation. It was intriguing to note how strongly the students felt about the matters discussed above. Half the papers called for an extension of Canadian territory to St. Lambert, in order to include the entire Seaway within Canada, and almost as many proposed the cession of a strip of territory from Ontario to New Brunswick (some called for the whole south shore!), so as to secure a territorial connection between the two remaining portions of Canada. The latter idea, if implemented, would of course, separate Québec from all direct contact with the United States. Obviously these third-year students had little comprehension of Québécois feelings for their homeland, and their plans should be given weight only in the sense that they point out an underlying concern with territorial continuity.

A possible economic consequence of separation would be the loss to remnant Canada of about a quarter of its internal market. Granted, the concept of sovereignty-association presupposes, as of now, the continued existence of a common market with no border control points, after the separation. However, it can be taken as certain that a newly independent Québec would endeavour to support and enlarge its own industries. It must be borne in mind that the E.E.C. countries came together after their industries had been well established on the basis of their internal markets. With a fairly secure home base, the E.E.C. presented them with great potentialities for expansion. Québec, on the other hand, would be in the position of trying to broaden its industrial base, which has, until now, been heavily dependent on textiles, paper, and basic refining. It is hard to imagine an independent Québec allowing the continuance of a situation where the metal-fabricating industries remain concentrated in Ontario and expanding in the West. Whether through import restrictions, or heavy governmental funding of competitive industries in Québec, remnant Canada would have to expect inconveniences at best, curtailment at worst. Because of its concentration on machinery, and its proximity to Québec, Ontario would probably be in a more vulnerable position than would the Western provinces¹⁰.

It is not the role of this paper to forecast internal developments in Québec, but it does seem probable that the funds for massive investments in new enterprises would necessarily come from governmental sources. A State Socialist economy, based increasingly on the East European economic model, would appear to be a distinct future possibility¹¹.

The major portion of remnant Canada, that from Ontario to British Columbia, would probably experience a pronounced economic and psychological shift to the west. Ties to the Atlantic world would appear to be severely weakened at a time when the West would continue to experience rapid growth. This portion would seem to have two distinct core

areas: Southern Ontario in the East, Alberta-British Columbia in the West. The former could be expected to decline, as the plenitude of resources, the westward shift of American population, and the increasing trading importance of the Pacific, gradually pulled the Canadian centre of gravity towards the West. Thousands of miles of Shield and Prairie would separate the new locus of power from the aging industrial outlier by Lake Ontario. Watching her former dominance and prosperity ebb and pass into the hands of distant, unsympathetic cities, Ontario could even be tempted to follow the model set by Québec, and opt for the seductive security of a small-scale independence, incredible as that may now seem. And thus the balkanization of Canada would be completed.

A number of problems of border definition would arise too, in fact some have already been discussed in the press. Although most commonly no change in the boundaries is anticipated or called for, there are still five potential problem areas which deserve examination: the North, Labrador, the Ottawa Valley, New Brunswick and the special case of Montréal.

In the North, the question concerns the particular extent of Québec which is to be considered. Again, it is fair to say that most people think of Québec as it is now, in its entirety, probably as a response to existing political realities, and to the shape made familiar to us by maps and television. However, there are people who feel that the Québec which would leave confederation should be the Québec which entered, that is the territory within the St. Lawrence watershed. Others would extend the area to the line existing before the final enlargement of 1912. The existence of massive Québec investment in the James Bay Power project and in the iron-mining district have *de facto* carried Québec's effective control well beyond the pre-1912 line. The recent agreements negotiated with the native peoples of the James Bay Area, have added an extra dimension of legality to Québec rights over that district.

However, even beyond James Bay and Schefferville lies a full quarter of the area of Québec. Retaining this for Canada would maintain the unity of the Arctic lands within Canada, and there is no doubt that most Anglophone Canadians view the administration of the Arctic lands as a particularly Federal responsibility and duty. It is safe to say that most Canadians do not feel the shores of Hudson Bay, Davis Strait and Ungava Bay to be Québécois in any sense of the word.

Most of the residents on those coasts are Inuit, Eskimo. Whatever the reason may be, Canadians seem to be able to imagine Indians becoming integrated citizens of Québec, but not the Inuit. The existence of a common Federal policy for the Inuit, and its extension to all the Inuit, seems to demand the inclusion of Povungnituk and Chimo with Tuktoyuktuk and Frobisher Bay, rather than with places to the South. Canadians do feel a responsibility for the welfare and advancement of these native peoples and even now are not friendly to the idea of their being bound jurisdictionally to a nationalistic regime in Québec City. More than any question of territory in itself, or of natural resources, it is this feeling for the rights and needs of the Inuit which will tend to keep the question of Northern Québec open.

The Ottawa Valley is a different kind of problem. The valley lowland has developed as a cultural-economic unit bordered by two portions of the Shield. The ideal location for a boundary would have been along the highland rims either Northeast or Southwest of the valley. It is unfortunate that the colonial administrators in London made use of the easy, visible line of the river instead of the more subtle but also more accurate line of a highland rim. It is now too late to make any appreciable changes. Francophones and Anglophones live intermixed on both sides of the river. They have begun to sort themselves out because of the pressures introduced by educational policies decreed from two capitals, each hun-

dreds of miles away and out of touch with the valley. In the middle of this cultural corridor an international boundary would be most unfortunate.

The Ottawa-Hull metropolitan area would defy solution. The massive Federal movement into Hull has made the situation virtually impossible to unravel in the event of any future attempt at secession. A unit separate from and yet in both countries might be suggested, along the lines of the Saar Basin, which functioned twice as an international unit, open to both Germany and France. However, the Saar was not the capital of either country. Canada could scarcely be expected to have its capital in a neutral international "free city."

The problem of the boundary with Labrador has been well studied and presented by Henri Dorion and hence requires little further elaboration¹². It is interesting to note that many Québec maps are reluctant to show the present boundary, much as many Germans still try to depict the BRD-DDR line as inconspicuously as possible. Once again we see the psychological importance of maps; clear cartographic presentation implies acceptance.

Unfortunately the boundary runs through the principal zone of development of the area, and thus bifurcates a compact region of mining and power development. Whichever province the resource may fall within, the ore or power must be moved out through Québec, at least as of now. Québec has long felt that the 1927 award was unjust. A nationalistic government, free of internal Canadian restraints, could well seek the rectification of this "imperialist" boundary.

The border with New Brunswick is perhaps the most marked area where cultural factors and political boundaries are not in agreement. Currently, the existing boundary has pre-eminence; the P.Q. does not seem to want to, or be able to, look beyond Québec. Within New Brunswick, the Acadians have clearly developed their own cultural identity; they feel that they can best work out their destiny either within the province, or within the framework of a new political unit along both shores of the Northumberland Strait.

History has shown that all this could change. The Acadians already fear that a Maritime union would swamp them with the greater number of Anglophones in Nova Scotia. As pointed out previously, a secession of Québec could provide added impetus towards the achievement of a union of the Maritime provinces. In Québec, an independence achieved by and powered by nationalism, must be expected to direct the attention of its people to the submerged confrères outside. Irredentism is a powerful emotional force, even in a world committed to the maintenance of existing boundaries.

Finally, there is the matter of Montréal itself. It is difficult even for an outsider to envisage the jurisdictional splitting of the metropolitan area along language lines. The Islands and the South Shore clearly form an economic unit and must operate as such if they are to have continued viability. Still, since language has been emphasized so strongly, it is worth noting that there are more Anglophones than Fracophones in the stretch between Côte-des-Neiges Road and the Ontario border. On the basis of numbers alone, on the democratic principle of one man-one vote the local citizenry could call for the movement of the boundary eastward to the middle of the Mount Royal itself, absurd as that may seem otherwise.

Viewed from Ontario, then, a secession of Québec from confederation would not only split the existing Canadian corpus into three or more segments, but would also give rise to a host of possible problems and conflicts. Remnant Canada would consist of two portions, each of which would face a re-orientation away from the centre, towards the peripheral oceans. Severe economic dislocations would occur in Ontario, and probably in Québec as

well. The St. Lawrence Seaway, the disposition of Ottawa-Hull, the responsibility for the Inuit, the Labrador border, and the matter of the protection of the linguistic minorities both in Québec and in remnant Canada, would provide numerous possibilities for disagreement. The psychological impact of the splitting on one side, and the tight enclosing on the other, would be more profound than is now customarily anticipated. The P.Q. assumption that the aims of the two partners, Canada and Québec, would always be in harmony, sounds incredibly naive.

The United States would inevitably be involved, and we can be sure that the Americans would not look with favour at the prospect of an unstable Canada, or of an ideologically-powered State Socialist regime on the Northern border of New York. Except for the opportunity to dance on the world stage, it is probable that Québec would enjoy more true independence and a fuller sense of nation-hood within Canada than she would as a "sovereign" state.

THE NEW NATIONALISM

Since I assume that this paper will be read by many residents of Québec, may I add a personal cautionary note. Please do not underestimate the strength of Canadian nationalism. One senses a tendency for the Québécois to believe that only they have a strong sense of nation-hood, and that Anglophone Canadians are unemotional with little attachment to their country. There appears to be the belief that Anglo-Canadians are primarily pragmatic, will always be willing to negotiate, and hence will always give way in the face of spirited, intransigent nationalism. Like all caricatures, such a belief is only partially true, and as such may be dangerous.

Among our young in particular, a strong Canadian nationalism has been in evidence for the past fifteen years. In the beginning this was a negative reaction to events in the United States, but it quickly deepened into a positive love of one's country. Those astute analysts of the public mood, the advertisers, recognized this development quickly. The vignette of scenes from coast to coast has become a standard of TV ads. The conception of a Canada *from sea to sea* is strong. One nation, the Canadian nation, is envisaged as being great enough to encompass, without conflict, the richness and vitality of our two or more constituent nations.

What the reaction of this younger generation to actual separation would be is unpredictable. Much would depend on the accidents of specific events, but we can be sure that the situation would be delicate. A discussion in a committee room, sealed by a handshake, is not a realistic expectation. It is a fact of human experience that federations which have lasted over a century, do not dissolve easily. This is especially true when the portion leaving contains a major pole of economic life, the principal internal transport link, the access to the sea, and the very seeds of national history.

Finally, it should not be necessary to point out that some anti-French feeling still exists in parts of Canada. The efforts of the past twenty years have greatly weakened the intensity of this old prejudice, but the separation of Québec would allow it free rein. J.-M.-R. Villeneuve's idea that splitting the Federation would actually help "nos frères de la dispersion", is completely unrealistic¹³. Beyond doubt, a secession by Québec would mean an abandonment of the Francophones in remnant Canada, and a major dilution of the richness of Canadian cultural life.

June 1979

NOTES

¹ "Québécois" means a Francophone resident of Québec. It is used in preference to "Quebecker". If the Parti Québécois is being referred to, it will be labelled either as such or as P.Q.

² "When a race ceases to express its thoughts and feelings in its own language,... it is lost as a race. The preservation of language is absolutely necessary for the preservation of a race, its spirit, its character, and temperament." BOURASSA, Henri (28 June, 1912): "La Langue française et l'avenir de notre race", in COOK, Ramsay (ed.) (1969): *French Canadian Nationalism, and anthology*, Toronto, MacMillan of Canada, 132-151.

³ Until the 1950's, Québécois nationalism was expressed strongly in religious terms, based on the concept of a divine mission.

⁴ It is interesting to note that in 1952 André Laurendeau stated that the idea of a homeland had diminished in importance: "L'idée de patrie subit une diminution dans le monde occidental." Intellectuals of the time were still reacting against the excesses of territorial nationalisms in the two World Wars. However, the idea of homeland has returned strongly in the 1970's. LAURENDEAU, André (Dec. 1952) Y a-t-il une crise du nationalisme? *L'Action nationale*, XL, 210-11.

⁵ In a perceptive analysis Dion has shown how the divorce of nationalism from religion has led to the emphasis on the state. "... l'État a été conçu comme l'expression finale et parfaite du devenir de la nation", DION, Léon (Nov. 1957) Le Nationalisme pessimiste: sa source, sa signification, sa validité, *Cité Libre*, 10.

⁶ For the sake of simplicity, this discussion treats Canadians as being either Anglophones or Francophones. It is assumed that immigrants will in time assimilate into one of the two groups, even if they do manage to maintain their ancestral culture as well. It is my experience that recent immigrants tend to be strongly in favor of one, undivided Canada.

⁷ CHAPUT, Marcel (1961) *Pourquoi je suis séparatiste*, Montréal, Les Éditions du Jour.

⁸ On the other hand, ties with "Central Canada" have been greatly strengthened in recent years by the migration of over two hundred thousand persons from the Atlantic provinces to Ontario.

⁹ "Mais peut-être nous sera-t-il permis de suggérer une solution à la difficulté: refaire le Dominion sur de nouvelles bases; le subdiviser en deux ou plusieurs confédérations. La province de Québec, avec la partie française d'Ontario et du Nouveau-Brunswick, pourrait former une confédération; le reste des provinces maritimes une autre; la partie anglaise de l'Ontario et de l'Ouest, une troisième. Peut-être même la province de Québec et les provinces de l'Est pourraient-elles former une seule confédération, leurs intérêts matériels étant assez identiques."

TARDIVEL, J.-P. (15 avril 1905) *La Vérité*, 2.

¹⁰ The value of trade between Ontario and Québec is now in the vicinity of four billion dollars per year in each direction.

¹¹ "... State intervention continues to increase: it is inevitable where nations are complete masters of their destiny. How much more will this be so in the case of a nation like ours, whose future depends on the vigour, the dynamism and the political and financial means of the State."

LEGER, Jean-Marc, Where Does Neo-Nationalism Lead?, in COOK, Ramsay, *op. cit.* 311. This is a translation of: Le néo-nationalisme, où conduit-il?, *Les Nouveaux Québécois*, 3^e Congrès des Affaires Canadiennes 1963, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1964, 41-58.

¹² DORION, Henri (1963), *La Frontière Québec-Terre-Neuve*, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval.

¹³ VILLENEUVE, J.-M.-R. (1923) Et nos frères de la dispersion, *Notre Avenir politique : Enquête de l'Action française*, 1922, Montréal, Bibliothèque de l'Action Française, 113-39.