



SUBMISSION
TO THE TASK FORCE ON CANADIAN UNITY

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Montreal
January 1978

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For the third time in four years the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations, a non-political association, finds, that because of its concern for the heritage and welfare of all children in Quebec, it must take a public position on a matter not directly educational.

Quebec Federation is composed of some 12,000 families, and comprises one hundred local Home and School Associations throughout the province of Quebec. Together they constitute the largest voluntary and independent parental educational organization in the Province.

The governing body of the organization is the Annual General Meeting, which is composed of delegates from each school. The on-going business between annual meetings is conducted by the Board of Directors, which consists of an elected Provincial Executive and representatives from each geographical area of the Province.

This Submission has been approved by the Board of Directors.

Since the matter of Canadian Unity became the subject of a public enquiry, there has been much reference to a Third Option. This concept of a Third Option can be misleading, if Third Option is understood as implying there are certain new political and social arrangements that are attainable, and if attained would ensure the cessation of the linguistic English/French tensions in Canada in general and of militant French nationalism in Quebec in particular.

Further, some of those who advocate Third Options (and some who advocate Independence) go on from there to place the blame for the continuation of linguistic tension on those they think have the power but not the will to adopt the new advocated arrangements. As was illustrated by Dr. Parizeau's denunciation of the Sun Life Company last week, on their line of reasoning, it is with the English Quebec elite -- the presumed holders of political and economic power -- that the real responsibility for the continuation of linguistic tension lies.

To such advocates, coercive linguistic legislation, the actual generator of the tension, is merely a symptom of something wrong in society. Attempts therefore to cope with the linguistic problem through enforcement of the law by a Federal defence of the constitutional rights of minorities in those provinces where they are violated would constitute an attempt to repress the symptom. It would represent a failure to treat the disease.

Is this line of reasoning a valid response to our unity problem, or is it a convenient rationale developed by perennial politicians? To be valid the primary assumptions -- that new political and social arrangements are attainable, and if attained they would ensure the cessation of linguistic tension -- have to be empirically sound. They have to be rooted in reality. If they are, then we can proceed to the secondary assumption, namely, that non-francophone Quebecers have the power but not the will to solve the unity problem. However, we will not have to go

that far, for the primary assumptions of the Third Option are not empirically valid in relation either to Canada in general or to Quebec in particular.

To demonstrate the basis for this belief, let us look at the principal Third Options which have been offered.

Socialist Democracy -- In the early and mid-seventies prominent labour leaders in Quebec and left-wing intellectuals of the New Democratic Party assumed, or behaved as if they assumed, that a policy of confrontation with the Bourassa Government, if accompanied by bellicose demands and slogans, would have the effect of raising the level of consciousness of the masses. This consciousness would lead to a substitution of class politics as envisaged in a 'Socialist Democracy' for the contemporary politics of 'Liberal Democracy'. In this way the workers revolution would be brought about in Quebec, and hopefully eventually in Canada. With that revolution the national disease of inequality of individual opportunity and of individual wealth will have been eradicated and the symptoms of the disease -- linguistic tensions and militant French Nationalism -- will have disappeared.

The assumption that class politics could be substituted for conventional party politics collided with reality in November 1976. The crusading worker revolutionaries of Quebec changed colour. The provincial fleur-de-lys colours of blue and white

showed through the red T-shirts. The Parti Québécois electoral win was seen for what it was: a victory for middle-class French nationalism, not for the working class. This denouement was inevitable, for the mutual uneasiness of the two communities in Quebec is a reflection not of class but of language. The assumption that class politics and worker revolutionary agitation will dissolve that uneasiness is a day-dream.

A United English-Speaking Canada -- This option is so patently unacceptable at this time that even those who would support the proposition of one official language for Canada -- English -- would acknowledge the right to use French as a regional second language in Quebec. But that concession does not overcome the fact that there are people who do not want to be a part of united English Canada 'at all'. The reduction of the status of French for them is a step in the wrong direction. Why would they accept peacefully a step they would not take voluntarily? A United English-Speaking Canada is not only unacceptable, it is probably unattainable without armed conflict.

The Eleventh Province -- This option probably deserves more consideration that it has received to date. At an earlier period in Canada's history when English/French tensions were high in the United Provinces of Canada, John A. MacDonalld, later Canada's first Prime Minister, was the advocate of a third province between

the Quebec border and Kingston as a means of dealing with the Upper Canada complaint of under representation in relation to population. He dropped that advocacy and later supported Confederation.

For the Eleventh Province to be attainable requires the concurrence of the Federal Government and the Government of Quebec. Moreover, once attained, for the Eleventh Province to ensure the cessation of linguistic tensions there would have to be effective power-sharing between the two linguistic communities that are the potential partners. The Federal authorities in fact should insist that effective power-sharing is a pre-condition for any further devolved government. In our view, devolved powers in the form of provincial autonomy have been abused in Quebec in the instance of Bill 22 and Bill 101. This abuse has conferred on the Eleventh Province movement the legitimacy it possesses in the eyes of non-francophone Quebecers. Such abuse must not be allowed to happen again anywhere in Canada. The Federal Government must make further devolution conditional on the provinces establishing and maintaining effective forms of power-sharing between the official language communities.

Although the Federal Government can establish pre-conditions for further devolution, it cannot make people who do not want to

share as partners be partners with those whose partnership they reject. You can lead the horse to water, but you cannot make it drink. Thus if an Eleventh Province were established it would not necessarily reduce linguistic tensions in Canada or reduce the militancy of French nationalism in Quebec. Indeed an attempt to pressure the Quebec Government into such an agreement would certainly produce resentment and fear -- fear that the ultimate objective is a United English-speaking Canada.

Associated Status -- Unlike the foregoing three Third Options which have the imprint of being English-speaking in origin, Associated Status has the imprint of French-speaking in origin. Economically there is nothing absurdly wrong -- or attractively efficacious -- about a customs-union between an independent Quebec and the remainder of Canada. But psychologically it would arouse similar feelings in English Canada to those which a United English-speaking Canada or an Eleventh Province arouse among French Quebecers.

The above summary tour of the Third Option front puts on display four options. They were found to be based on illusion or to lead to situations even worse than what we have.

The Federal Arrangement we have in Canada today some people sneeringly refer to as the 'Status Quo'. The label can be misleading. Since Confederation the arrangement has been neither stationary nor unresponsive. Indeed since

the commencement of the Quiet Revolution in Quebec in 1960 the Status Quo has been very responsive. With the Quiet Revolution language tension began to accelerate in Quebec. At the same time the equilibrium between the two linguistic communities at the national level became unstable. In response the Federal Parliament and the legislatures of provinces with numerically significant French-speaking minorities -- Ontario, New Brunswick and Manitoba -- moved to supplement the B.N.A. Act regarding French language rights outside of Quebec. The Federal Parliament extended the 'personality principle' of the language policy by adopting the Official Languages Act. Under this Act a dualistic (English and French) institutional language philosophy was applied in all areas within the competence of the Federal Government. Similarly, in Ontario, Manitoba, and New Brunswick, legislation has been passed protecting minority rights of French-speaking citizens in those provinces. And in 1977, New Brunswick officially became a bilingual province -- now the only one in Canada.

Despite the flexibility and responsiveness of the Status Quo a stable balance between the official language communities has not been achieved. It is a puzzling proposition. The Status Quo system, which had successfully accommodated the various pressures and changes of 100 years, has failed to provide a stable equilibrium after 10 years of continuing change under the Trudeau regime -- change which has implanted 'personality bilingualism' in nine provinces, while tolerating a regression to 'territorial bilingualism' (officially unilingual French despite Section

133 of the B.N.A. Act) in Quebec.

There are three possible explanations of the failure, but they are of varying plausibility. One possibility is that the core of hard line French nationalism in and out of Quebec is so overwhelming it cannot be contained or restrained within the federal system. However, the opinion polls before and since November 1976 have registered a steady reading of under 20% of the electorate as supporters of outright separation. This percentage is almost identical to the non-francophone proportion in the province. The welfare and priorities of this latter group have been studiously ignored by the provincial and federal governments for years, so it is hard to believe 20% represents overwhelming political pressure.

A second possibility is pressure has been simulated by the artificial stimulation of linguistic grievances. V. Andrews in his book, Bilingual Today, French Tomorrow, singles out the Secretary of State's office of the Federal Government as being particularly aggressive in organizing and financing 'animators' for 'francophones hors de Québec'. An impartial reader, however, while he may find the accusation disquieting, will also note the conspicuous absence of documentary evidence.

A third possibility in explaining the failure to achieve a stable balance between the two major language communities relates not to the strength of the French nationalist demand, but rather to the weakness of the non-francophone counter response. To appreciate this last possibility,

one has to think of the federal arrangement as a system of checks and balances. Let two of the chief architects of that system describe its concept and its equilibrating mechanism. First the concept, as described by John A. MacDonald:-

I have no accord with the desire expressed in some quarters that by any mode whatever there should be an attempt made to oppress the one language or to render it inferior to the other: I believe that would be impossible if it were tried, and it would be foolish and wicked if it were possible. The statement that has been made so often that this is a conquered country is à propos de rien. Whether it was conquered or ceded, we have a constitution now under which all British subjects are in a position of absolute equality, having equal rights of every kind of language, of religion, of property and of person. There is no paramount race in this country; there is no conquered race in this country; we are all British subjects and those who are not English are none the less British subjects on that account.

(A National Understanding, page 28, from a speech given in 1890)

The equilibrating mechanism as described by Georges-Étienne Cartier:-

We could not do away with the distinctions of race. We could not legislate for the disappearance of the French Canadians from American soil, but British and French Canadians alike could appreciate and understand their position relative to each other.... It was a benefit rather than otherwise that we had a diversity of races. Of course the difficulty, it would be said, would be to deal fairly by the minority. In Upper Canada the Catholics would find themselves in a minority, in Lower Canada the Protestants would be in a minority, while the lower provinces were divided. Under such circumstances would any one pretend that either the local or general governments would sanction any injustice? What would be the consequence, even supposing any such thing were attempted by any one of the local governments? It would be censured everywhere. Whether it came from Upper Canada or from Lower Canada, any attempt to deprive the minority of their rights would be at once thwarted.

(K.A. MacKirdy, J.S. Moir, and Y.F. Zoltvany, "Changing Perspectives in Canadian History", Dent and Sons, Don Mills, 1971, p. 214.)

Earlier we noted the changes made under the Status Quo in the past ten years to improve the rights and benefits of francophones outside of Quebec. This accommodation has continued as evidenced by the undertakings of the provincial premiers at the St. Andrews Conference in August 1977.

The non-francophone minority inside Quebec exceed in numbers all the francophones outside of Quebec. As a percentage of the population of Quebec that minority is slightly less than 20%. Yet in the provincial civil service non-francophones are less than one-half of one percent of the total. Moreover, they have no representation on the government side in the National Assembly and virtually no participation in the political party that formed the government. In fact, in Quebec power-sharing between the two linguistic communities has atrophied beyond recognition. Instead of a partnership between the communities, powers granted under provincial autonomy have been monopolised by one community, and in the process there has been abuse of the rights of the other. This spectacle is surely one worthy of a response as envisaged by Georges-Étienne Cartier. Yet the response of the Federal Government over the years has been the opposite of that envisaged by Cartier when he spoke of neither provincial nor federal governments sanctioning any injustice. Instead of **buttressing** the counter-vailing capacity of non-francophone Quebec, the Federal Government has been systematically dismantling the anglophone community's mechanisms of self-defense. The following examples are illustrative of what has been happening:

- 1) Whereas the tradition was that one member of the Supreme Court of Canada be a non-francophone Quebecer, during the Trudeau regime that tradition was abandoned and a francophone Quebecer substituted.
- 2) Although non-francophones in Quebec exceed the individual populations of Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, yet the working language of the federal civil service located in the province in centres other than Hull was converted to French. Only now is the Federal Government giving thought to establishing English working language units in Quebec in centres other than Hull.
- 3) At a time when non-francophones in Quebec have no representation in the provincial cabinet, their representation in the federal cabinet was allowed to decline to its lowest strength since the start of the Trudeau regime, and then one of the members was assigned a Ministry that took him to the northern territories during most of the debate on Bill 101.

We would be willing to regard these illustrations as indicative of the inevitable decline of political and economic power of the non-francophone community in Quebec as population and economic development in the Canadian federation shifts westward. However there is evidence in the Federal Government's official statement in 1977 on language policy -- A National Understanding, Un Choix National -- that the minority community's loss of counter-vailing effectiveness is not due solely to invisible and impersonal market forces. We quote from the official statement:

The Federal Government is firmly of the view that the French language should as generally be the language of work in the Province of Quebec as the English language is in the Province of Ontario, for instance.

It is difficult to reconcile this passage with another statement in

A National Understanding:

What should govern above all else is a sense of respect and civility towards the minority official language and the minority official language groups in each province. Measures should be adopted, consistent with the particular circumstances of each province, that would enable those groups to participate to the fullest extent possible in the life of the province and Canada *IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE* (our italics).

A National Understanding was intended to explain one language community's views to the other. Unfortunately it omitted a very relevant statistical perspective for that purpose. In 1871 the French speaking in Ontario were a minority of 2%, while the English speaking in Quebec were a minority of 24%. Today those claiming French as a mother tongue in Ontario are a minority of 6.3%. Those unilingually French constitute 1% of that province's population. In contrast, in Quebec the non-French minority -- those who have an interest in English language rights -- is 19.2% and 10% of the Province (the equivalent of the population of P.E.I. and Newfoundland combined) is unilingually English. That 10% is 3% of the population of Canada. They have a direct and vital interest in unravelling the contradiction revealed in the Federal document on language policy.

When the authors of A National Understanding quote from Georges-Étienne Cartier on the nature of the Canadian federation, they stop and significantly omit the passage we have used above to describe the nature of the equilibrating process. Instead of the dual/duality described by Georges-Étienne Cartier -- wherein the English are a majority in Canada and the French a minority, and in Quebec the French are a majority and the non-French a permanent minority -- the authors speak

rather of Canada being a linguistic duality, i. e., a country with two linguistic communities in partnership. It is a subtle distinction, but one which changes the basic concept of Canada and the nature of its equilibrating process.

In this context we find it ironic that the party to the federal arrangement playing its role fully as conceived by the Fathers of Confederation is the Government of Quebec. In offering reciprocity accords in education to the other provinces at the Provincial Premiers Conference in August 1977, Quebec was expressing a concern (whatever the motive) about the plight of the francophone minority outside of Quebec. The St. Andrews Declaration and Prime Minister Trudeau's subsequent offer of constitutional change were direct responses to the Quebec initiative, thereby acknowledging the legitimacy of intervention from outside on behalf of minorities inside a province.

Why, we ask ourselves, has there not been similar support from outside Quebec when human rights and freedoms are attacked by legislation such as Bill 22 and Bill 101? Is it that people outside Quebec really believe, to use Prime Minister Trudeau's phrase, that they would be doing the minorities' dirty work for them? What concept of Canada does that imply? Certainly not the concept described by Georges-Étienne Cartier.

If defence of the constitutional rights of non-francophones and the human rights of all in Quebec is dirty-work, it is Canada's dirty work.

In defending freedom of choice of official language in communication, work, and education, one is defending not only the rights of non-francophones in Quebec, but the individual right of all Canadians, French or English, to choose for themselves. This dirty work is not only on behalf of individual liberties, important as they are, but equally important, on behalf of retaining international competitiveness in those sectors of Canadian business which are distinctively Canadian. Those sectors that help identify Canada as a nation rather than a branch-plant colony.

Wallace Clement in his book The Canadian Corporate Elite distinguishes three types in the Canadian economic power structure:

First is the indigenous elite, closely associated with dominant Canadian controlled financial, utilities, and transportation corporations, with smaller representation in the manufacturing and resource extraction sectors. Second, is a comprador elite, the senior management and directors of dominant foreign controlled branch plants, mainly in manufacturing and resource sectors. This group is subservient to the third group, the parasite elites, who control major multinational corporations which dominate important sectors of the Canadian economy through branch plants...

Compradorisation creates a situation where capital, entrepreneurial talent and investment potential are eliminated from the 'host' country with the effect of decreasing, rather than increasing, autonomy with development...

U.S. investment has reversed development toward autonomy and instead has brought Canada into a situation of greater dependency than during previous periods. This confirms [Harold] Innis' perceptive statement that "Canada moved from colony to nation to [branch plant] colony".

...these remarks refer exclusively to those sectors of the Canadian economy dominated by multinational corporations, particularly natural resources and manufacturing, and not to the other sectors, such as finance, transportation and utilities which were once associated with U.K. portfolio investment but are now controlled by indigenous [Canadian] elites.

...there is a core of Canadian capitalists who are powerful within Canada and world capitalism as a whole -- such as Canadian financial capital in banks and insurance companies but also in utilities... and even some manufacturers.

Historically, leadership and development in the sectors largely controlled by the indigenous elite -- finance, transportation, and utilities -- are closely identified with Quebec. Two of the three largest chartered banks have their headquarters in Montreal; the largest trust company is also headquartered there, as well as the largest insurance company, the two major railroads, the largest airline, and the major telephone company and its associated electronic manufacturing facilities. For all of them, the failure of governments outside of Quebec to play their full role in the equilibrating process confronts the indigenous elite with a Hobson's choice: if they acquiesce in the cultural aggression of legislation such as Bill 101, they will lose their competitive edge in international capitalism and cause Canada to regress further from nation to colony; on the other hand, if rather than acquiesce they move their operations to other parts of Canada where society and government are organized on the basis of freedom of choice, then Canada's international competitiveness will assume an even more distinctively english accent and de facto separation -- in the sense of removing Quebec from the centres of major decision-making about the allocation and use of Canadian resources -- will have occurred.

In this matter of Canadian unity, therefore, we think abandonment of the Status Quo is ill-conceived. The Status Quo has demonstrated a flexibility and adaptability that can serve Canadian more effectively than other Third

Options. Over the past ten years Canadians have demonstrated they have the necessary capacity to achieve a stable balance between the linguistic communities, namely, a willingness to change. What has been absent in the federal arrangement is effective power-sharing between the official language communities in Quebec. As a consequence, there has been an absence of effective counter-vailing pressure. That absence, given the tendencies of militant nationalism, puts into jeopardy not only the future of Canada as an effective competitor on the international scene, but also the prospects of all children in the Province in the two official language communities.

To reestablish effective power-sharing between the linguistic communities in Quebec, the conclusion is clear. The concept that has emerged in the last ten years of Canada being a linguistic duality -- i.e., a partnership of majority/minority linguistic communities -- should be abandoned, and the concept of dual/duality as envisaged by the Fathers of Confederation -- i.e., two partnerships of majority/minority linguistic communities -- should be revived and its mechanism for keeping both sets of relations in balance should be diligently fostered.