

**Federalism and Cultural Pluralism:  
The Canadian Experience**

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## INTRODUCTION

Canada is now, and always has been, a culturally plural land. Long before Europeans arrived to colonise and settle the vast upper portion of the North American continent peoples of diverse cultures reamed the land. The names of great European explorers and adventurers washed upon the coastal shores of North America -the Genoese explorer John Cabot sailing under and English flag in 1497; Gaspar and Michael Cort-Real from Portugal in 1500; Alvaraez Fagundes of Portugal in 1521; John Rut from England in 1527; Estevan Gomez also of Portugal in 1524-25 and finally, Jacques Cartier for France in 1534 and 1535. The Corte-Real brothers were the first to explore the waters of Canada's arctic and the first to sight those people who Europeans later called "Eskimo" or what today we more correctly call "Inu" or "Inuit".

What the great 15th and 16th Century explorers could neither have known nor have understood is that while they looked upon the land as often barren and inhospitable there were, indeed, cultures and peoples who had inhabited that land for centuries. The territory which now comprises "Canada" encompassed no fewer than 12 linguistic groups, some sixty distinct tribal communities and literally hundreds of tribal bands<sup>1</sup>. What Europeans assumed to be primitive savages ("noble savages" if one believes Jean Jacques Rousseau!) were diverse peoples and cultures co-habiting in some form of regularised relationship their physical environment. Forms of governance existed and social orders prevailed. But, because they did not comply with the European view of "civilisation", the recent arrivals on the continent set about changing and often eliminating the host cultures. It is ironic today that the very process launched in the 16th Century by Europeans continues as new groups of "explorers" and "settlers" arrive in Canada. Today, however, the inhabitants are able to voice their concerns and they are often able to argue that existing cultures are in danger of being submerged by the arrival of new and foreign cultures. Canada's original native inhabitants were not so able to resist the tidal-wave of cultural change and, in consequence, they were submerged and often disappeared.

It is possible to imagine that 100 or more years from now the fundamental languages not only of Canada but of North America in general will be entirely different than they are today. Indeed, a vast influx of persons from Hong Kong into the west coast city of Vancouver already is altering the cultural environment of that community. In turn, however, such immigration from non-traditional sources has evoked a widespread reaction in Canada and has led to a recent re-

definition of qualifications for immigrant status. Fear that existing cultures will be irrevocably altered and even submerged are substantial motivators for much of the debate which surrounds relationships between the two "founding" communities in Canada.

## **CANADA'S FOUNDING COMMUNITIES**

It is an historic irony today that in the contemporary contest between the two founding European cultures in Canada that those who originally, were termed "Canadians" (as a mode of distinguishing them from the 'conquering British' and who, when dignity once more began to flourish, called themselves "Canadiens") have chosen to pursue another identity "Quebecois". Of course, I shall argue, as many have before, that the two terms are not incompatible. After all, most of us are capable of simultaneously identifying with cultures and concomitant symbols of state at several levels. Thus, today, to be a fervant Quebecois need not be an assumption that one has also precluded being a fervant Canadian.

As J.R.Miller (1975;63) has suggested, form Confederation in 1867 Canada never was intended to be anything else but a "political entity". Uniformity,

"...would have proved impossible of attainment. The various [British] colonies, with their unique historical development, their different religious denominations, and their distinct nationalities, could not have been homogenized culturally as they were joined politically. The peculiarities of language, creed, and regional identity had to be maintained, for several good and compelling reasons".

Miller adds:

"Even if it were possible to assimilate all British North Americans, to what would you assimilate them?...Canadian unity was not purchased at the price of homogenization because the colonial politicians who produced it had no intention of creating problems for themselves by debating something as abstract and theoretical as the cultural basis of the new state".

Yet, while political waging and compromise characterised the confederal and/or federal settlement recorded in the original Canadian constitution of 1867 - *The British North America Act*- issues of culture were deep and subtly pervasive.

Canada's two **founding** European cultures were French and British -the latter being a blend of English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish<sup>2</sup>. Historically these two cultures had entwined on many occasions from the days of Caesar and Romans to William the Conqueror in 1066 and Edward IV's invasion of France in 1475<sup>3</sup> and, of course, the Seven Years War which led to the capture of New France by the British and its cession to the British Empire by the 1763 Treaty of Paris.

A British Proclamation of 1763 which, among other things, limited the territorial size of New France -renamed Quebec- in an attempt to assimilate the newly conquered peoples and encourage settlement by British immigrants largely failed in its intent. Consequently, in 1774 in a document known as *The Quebec Act*, the British restored French civil law, the seigneurial system and, established Catholicism (for the first time ever in a British territory) as a religion with acknowledged status. The right of the Church to collect the tithe was also ensured. I do not propose to enter into the debate over who dominated whom in late 18th and early 19th century Quebec<sup>4</sup>. What I do wish to suggest, however, is that rather imperceptibly and irrevocably the cultural identities of both francophone communities in Canada (Quebec and *les acadiennes*<sup>5</sup>) persisted - albeit that of Quebec with great presence.

It is important to appreciate this persistence of the francophone cultural identity in Canada over the difficult century after the 1763 conquest<sup>6</sup>. The conquest had been tenuous and the 1774 Quebec Act was unashamedly an attempt to ensure that the French inhabitants of the newly acquired territory did not join the burgeoning revolt in American colonies. Whether the British flattered themselves with the belief that the inhabitants of the new colony remained passive during the American invasion due to enlightened colonial policy or, simply due to indifference is not certain. What is certain, however, is that for the next 70 years assimilation was the operational premise of British colonial governance. What is equally certain, however, is that *les canadiennes* learned the intricacies of the British constitution much more rapidly than the British had anticipated (Igartua, 1974). Employing British political institutions, *les canadiennes* (especially of the mercantile class), sought to expand their own control over laws and institutions in accordance with French law and tradition.

In summary, the very nature of linguistic and cultural protections assured French speaking Canadians, especially after the *Constitution Act* of 1791 when they participated in colonial government, ensured that *la survivance* of the francophone fact in North America would have a substantial political dimension. In a war with the Americans (1812-1814) many francophones rendered service to

British in return for land grants. Their loyalty was demonstrated and there was no turning back as 1837 uprisings in both "Upper" (Ontario) and "Lower" (Quebec), in support of representative government, suggested. The francophone political fact was clearly in play in Canada after 1841 and *The Act of Union*<sup>7</sup>. Thus, in the 25 years thereafter, leading up to the 1867 federation of the four North American British colonies as "Canada", the imperative of cultural and linguistic survival had been converted into an effective political presence.

The constitutional agreement of 1865 which led to the final British North America Act in 1867 was, for all practical purposes, a political conclusion among two diverse linguistic and religiously premised communities. Canada was a political compromise. It was not a country founded on high purpose and with stunning constitutional declarations- Unlike the Americans, the Canadian constitutional drafters produced an archaic document -premiered upon theories of British constitutional practise already out-dated in 1867<sup>8</sup>.

The concept, therefore, that the 1867 federal relationship in Canada was a political compromise between two "founding" races holds considerable substance. That concept is extremely important in understanding events which have transpired in the 128 years since that political agreement. McRoberts and Postgate (1980;32) have observed:

"For French Canada, the real benefit of Confederation [in 1867] was the provision of a range of powers, limited but sacrosanct, over its own affair...[Quebec became] a concrete political unit, protected by the Constitution, in which the French Canadian community could be clearly dominant and thus have a chance to survive on its own terms".

But, they also note that:

"French Canadians were relegated to the position of a permanent minority where their rights and powers were subject to the actions of the Anglo-Canadian majority".

For French speaking Canadians, especially those in Quebec, the Canadian Constitution was a permanent political agreement whereby the minority francophone community would garner not only internal self-determination but assurances that their minority status -not only in Canada but continentally- would be protected<sup>9</sup>. Reflecting upon this, Alain Gagnon (1989;147) has noted that "the Canadian system has been successful, not so much in resolving conflict, as in

managing it, and striking a flexible balance between the divergent views of the initial bargain". The Quebec's fears that their language, religion and culture would be abused was borne out in the years after the 1867 'Confederation' (federal) agreement<sup>10</sup>. Since 1867, the dominant political issue in Canada has been the nature of the fundamental bargain between the two founding communities.

Fears that the original bargain is threatened combined with some rather romantic notions about maturing "nationhood" provide much of the impetus for the contemporary debate over culture and politics in Canada.

## **NOTES ON THE CONTEMPORARY DEBATE**

Latent and overt separatism have been part of Quebec nationalism certainly for most of the 20th Century. Arguments have taken many forms but one overwhelming characteristic of much of the discussion has been a sense of romanticism tinged with fear of what some neo-nationalists describe as "cultural genocide".

The romanticism of neo-nationalism in Quebec is premised upon assumptions both about the maturation of a people and the role independence would play in establishing the identity of those people. It is a style of nationalism characteristic of many other nationalist movements and it lends itself well to political manipulation, for like a religion, nationalism plays upon the sentiments often at the expense of reason and common sense.

Sovereignty is seen as a natural process -"we can see the Quebec nation transform itself from a fragile bud to a superb flower opening up to the world" (Lagassé, 1992). An holistic perception of a collectivity, saved from assimilation, now moving forward with heightened political consciousness and a sense of "nation". For some of the extreme nationalists Quebec sits precariously perched on the brink of annihilation "maintenant ou jamais" screams the title of Pierre Bourgault's (1990) challenge; "Gouverner ou disparaître" is the warning of one Pierre Valdeboncoeur (in 1976 he was also writing of genocide).

Other neo-nationalists see Quebec as strong and far from disappearing (Latouche, 1990). Latouche even praises federalism but, like many fellow nationalists, common sense is abandoned once romanticism takes over. Latouche argues that only a true political state will permit Quebec society to extend to the apex of its potential as a fully pluralistic entity. The argument finds

its most complete and fullest expression in a 1993 work by Fernand Dumont one of Quebec's most respected scholars and former director of *Le centre Québécois de recherche sur la culture*<sup>11</sup>. Dumont argues his nationalism in terms of a "genesis" -a quasi-organic entity with a life entirely of its own. The "otherness" of "les anglais" contrasted to the emerging realisation of being "French", a passage from childhood to adolescence, a transition from homeland to country, a genesis from a people to a nation.

For neo-nationalists such as Dumont, Quebec's problem has been its historic inability to find its collective identity as a nation. It has reached several times for the elusive national identity and each time the collectivity has faltered. This, Dumont argues, is the "vocation" (p. 235) of a people who pursued their identity under the very eyes of the British Empire. Myths and legends built upon myths and legends in the neo-nationalist world. The 1774 Quebec Act is seen as clever victory for those with vision enough to see survival as the collective and immediate goal. The rebellion of 1837 is re-interpreted away from a struggle for responsible government to symbolise another act of defiance by the collectivity against the cultural oppressor. Constructing nationalist myths continues to this very day. A constitutional agreement by nine of ten provinces (not including Quebec) in 1981, takes on the myth of the "night of the long knives" or "the stab in the back". The myth conveniently overlooks the role -or lack, thereof- played by Quebec's the nationalist Premier René Levesque. While the Premier played cards in his hotel room the other government leaders concluded a deal. While Quebec's Premier snuggled in bed the next morning, the other government leaders announced their deal.

Another aspect of the contemporary debate in Quebec relates to a genuine fear that the identity of French speaking persons will be submerged as the nature of immigration changes. Quebec's birthrate has fallen from 3.78 in 1951 to 1.43 in 1986. This constitutes one of the lowest birthrates in the world<sup>12</sup> (Institut, 1989). A 1988 study commissioned by the Quebec *Conseil de la langue française* concluded that the proportion of total Canadian population who would inhabit Quebec would decline from 26.5% in 1981 to 24.1% by 2021. A fear of being culturally submerged, a fear now being voiced by English-speaking Canadians as larger numbers of non-European immigrants enter Canada, is much more acute in a province wherein minority status has always been a way of life<sup>13</sup>. The irony is that Quebec is now having enormous difficulties assimilating immigrants -much the same experience that "British" Canada, historically, had trying to assimilate French speaking inhabitants.

In many respects the contemporary debate in Canada is constitutional in the first instance but, more fundamentally, it pertains very closely to the ongoing historic struggle for cultural survival in the territory generally described as Quebec<sup>14</sup>. As suggested above, the issue of cultural survival has never been submerged in so far as concerns the French speaking community of Canada. Fears now being expressed that the cultural onslaught is even more threatening reflect much of the contemporary debate generally in Canada over immigration and the impact upon traditional "Canadian" cultural values. A 1991 national consultative inquiry into Canada's future (Citizen's Forum, 1991; 85-87) found that Canadians were challenging concepts such as "multi-culturalism" as being divisive:

Overwhelmingly, participants [in public consultation hearings] told us that reminding us of our different origins is less useful in building a united country than emphasizing the things we have in common...

Participants queried the focus on citizens' origins and celebrating heritage cultures, rather than embracing a uniquely Canadian national character and celebrating our Canadian heritage...

A great many participants see the funding of multi-culturalism programs as a concrete example of the way in which government is encouraging divisiveness through our diverse cultural origins, rather than fostering unity.

The theme of cultural submersion is an omnipresent theme not only in Quebec but as well in English-speaking Canada. For French-speaking residents of Quebec, the lure of recourse to nationalism is its attractiveness as a defensive mode -a fortress- against assimilation, multi-culturalism and eventual disappearance. For French culture to survive, the machinery of an identifiable political state must be in place. The argument linking cultural survival to political identity has been compelling these past few years.

## **CULTURAL PLURALISM: DIVERSITY WITHIN UNITY -THE FEDERAL DILEMMA**

### **Table 1**

Viewed from a linguistic perspective among the top 20 countries of origin, roughly 125,000 immigrants were located where English is a major spoken language while fewer than 20,000 immigrants arrived from locations where French is a major language -a ratio in excess of 6:1. Another 50,000, among the top 20 countries of origin are from locations where neither of Canada's official



languages is spoken although, unless an immigrant is a sponsored family member, some minimum linguistic skill in either official language is pre-requisite to immigration to Canada.

Another consideration is the radical and religious mix of immigrants. Indeed, roughly 20% of the immigrants were from countries traditionally associated with European culture, caucasian race and Christian religions. Roughly 80% of the immigrants to Canada in 1993 were of non-traditional religions and most were also non-caucasian. These proportions have been roughly similar for the past 25 years. In the 1970's the federal Government responded with funded programmes designed to promote multi-culturalism. School officials in major cities such as Vancouver and Toronto instituted "heritage" programmes whereby students could receive formal credit for certain types of studies in a heritage language of their preference. By 1990, for example, the Toronto suburb of North York offered heritage language credit courses in more than 54 languages. Various religious communities (e.g. Muslims, Sikhs) are seeking official recognition of their religious schools as part of the formal educational system.

Finally, an additional source of tension emerges when one considers where immigrants from non-traditional Canadian sources choose to reside. Many, emerging from urban areas themselves, take residence in Canada's principle urban centres (Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Winnipeg). This accentuates an already well entrenched historic alienation of rural and smaller community residents from urban dwellers. Urban communities are perceived to be considerably more culturally diverse than outlying and rural communities and the sense "two cultural communities" -that of traditional values and cultures and that of the recent immigrants- has taken on implied currency. The perception that there is some coherence to the cultural onslaught of new arrivals in Canada is belied by the diversity of ethnicities, religions and languages each of which seeks both to preserve its unique qualities while simultaneously adding to the complex fabric of late 20th Century Canada.

For the two "founding European cultures" (French and British) the same sense of cultural challenge is present. But, for those of the British cultural community -a community already diluted in cultural terms by over 100 years of immigration from non-British (but largely European sources, Ukraine, Poland, Iceland, Russia, Italy, Portugal, etc.)- a need to survive has never been a factor. As the dominant culture in Canada and, in North America, the British (English language) culture has never had to struggle.

For French speaking Canadians, however, cultural survival is an embedded cultural norm. Historically, for example, in Quebec, the Roman Catholic Church served, especially in rural communities, as a touchstone around which survival of French language, culture and social values could be assembled.

"Had not Bishop Laflèche written that every person, every family, every society had a place and a purpose in the divine scheme of the universe...? Thus, French Canadians -it cannot be too often repeated- only need, in general, that moderation of wealth and possessions which benefits their peaceful, honest and virtuous character<sup>15</sup>".

However, as the influence of the Catholic Church declined, particularly after the 1960's, a new theocracy emerged, that of neo-nationalism.

Historically the Catholic Church served as a powerful intervenor on behalf of traditional Franco-Canadienne values. It shielded French culture and gave that founding community a base upon which political and, to a lesser extent economic, power could be founded. Quebec's "quiet revolution" of the 1960's diminished that intervening role for the Church and forced intellectuals and politicians in Quebec to re-evaluate both their own political acumen and their role and relationship with the other founding European community.

As early as the mid-1950's, in a document known as the Tremblay Report<sup>16</sup> (Quebec, 1954), it was being vigorously argued that there were two nations-two founding communities- united historically in a federal compact. The implications of the Tremblay Commission Report were that the federation "Canada" was a product of a contractual agreement between French speaking and English speaking Canadians. The concept re-interpreted history and inverted, by implication, the relationship between the federal government and the provinces which is so clearly evident in the 1967 Constitution.

Given the scope of powers reserved to the federal government, plus the large number of ensuing fiscal transfers from the federal government to the provinces in the years after the 1867 Confederation, there can be no doubt that the constitutional relationship was anything but a "compact" among equals. The 1867 Constitution is "colonial" in attitude; it posits the federal government in much the same relationship to the provinces as the then British colonial government had with its overseas colonies.

However, the enormous powers reserved to the federal government by that 1867 constitutional political deal does not erode the more critical issue of the perceived equality of the two founding European cultures. Without exception since 1867, Quebec's political leaders have argued that Quebec -as a repository of francophone culture in Canada- was an equal partner in the 1867 confederal arrangement. That the partnership resulted in a disproportionate balance in power between the central government and the provincial governments does not in any manner undermine, or detract from, the essential political partnership deal of 1867. A political deal among political elites, equals in a entirely political engagement -resulted in a asymmetrical constitutional division of powers. The resulting constitutional asymmetry, ultimately was, and is, perceived by many contemporary Quebec political and intellectual leaders to be threatening to the continued cultural survival of the Quebec French speaking and cultural community<sup>17</sup>.

Whether one views the contemporary *sovereigniste* movements in Quebec as a form of cultural paranoia, as a political expedient, or as a legitimate concern about the future of culture so long isolated from its historic roots as to easily qualify today as a *distinct* culture, the fact remains that a large proportion of Quebec's current population appears willing to experiment with independence<sup>18</sup>.

In an effort to allay fears that Quebec's version of nationalism will become intolerant of other ethnic and cultural communities within an independent state, quiet efforts are being made to assure groups -including native Canadians- that, despite its pursuit of cultural sovereignty, an independent Quebec would be pluralistic and tolerant of minority languages (e.g. English) and cultures. Unfortunately, there is some reason to be concerned.

First, if the fundamental reason for Quebec's pursuit of sovereignty is "cultural survival", then any arguments for toleration and respect must be shadowed by the very experience which has aroused the nationalist passion in Quebec -the threat of multi-culturalism. Second, if experience in other recent nationalist by-products is any example (e.g. Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Kirgizstand and Turkmenistan) where nationality laws have, or are becoming, obsessively nationalistic, the case for a Quebec founded upon supra-nationalism does not bode entirely well for non-francophones<sup>19</sup>. Third, while Quebec boasts its own Charter of Rights, there is no doubt that the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was widely perceived within Quebec as an assault upon French language and culture. Thus, despite an overriding federal constitutional guarantee and a provincial assurance of freedom, in

practise an incumbent Government of Quebec in 1989 employed a provision of the federal constitution in order to place a French language law above constitutional protection. If that is the record under a Liberal Government committed to some form of re-defined federal relationship, one might reasonable wonder about the behaviour of a sovereigntist Government propelled into power on a tide of supranationalism.

In summary, it is difficult to imagine, however the disguise is designed, that a political entity which achieves independence with the sole purpose of protecting a cultural identity, can be tolerant in the long-run of those with whom history associated their own diminished status. Nationalism, for whatever reason, has a history of immense intolerance (Horowitz, 1985; Smith, 1988). But nationalism for cultural, religious and linguistic purposes has an even more telling heritage because such nationalism so readily drifts towards 'negativism' rather than towards the higher purpose in which so many of its proponents place credance.

In the long-run, in terms of Quebec's survival as an isolated cultural island in Western hemispheric sea, it probably stands a much better chance of both survival and fruition as a political, cultural and economic partner -the very status independence would reject- in Canada. Both Quebec and Canada must learn to benefit from their uneasy partnership while simultaneously adapting to the globalisation of multi-culturalism which continues, relentlessly, to modify the host societies. As many recent nationalists have yet to learn, there is little room on this planet for culturally fortified islands.

## **CONCLUSION**

Canada's experiment with federalism continues. It has always been, and doubtlessly will continue to be, a relationship founded upon political expediency. If it is a partnership between the two funding European communities, then in every constitutional and practical respect that partnership continues and is inviolable. There is no reason for Quebec to assume that the validity of the original partnership has been diminished by virtue of an influx of immigrants from non-traditional and non-European sources. The federal Government has continuously re-affirmed that partnership and, on three occasions in the past 20 years, sought constitutionally to clarify and strengthen that partnership. Indeed, a 1969 *Official Languages Act* sought to ensure availability of federal government services throughout Canada. Unfortunately, outside Quebec the results are not hopeful. Indeed, an estimated 196,087 students outside Quebec were enrolled in

elementary and secondary educational programmes. By 1993-1994, that number had dropped to 159,377. Similarly, again outside Quebec, while the number of Canadians whose "mother-tongue" is French actually rose between 1986 and 1991 (from 942,334 to 978,046) those who spoke French regularly at home decreased from 686,000 (1986) to 634,000 (1991) while the population of Canada increased substantially (StatsCan, 1994). For French speaking Canadians outside Quebec, the issue of culture is significant and critical. "Exogamy", the study of those who marry outside their language group, has become a vital concern of non-Quebec resident francophones as an estimated 36% of francophone women in the province of Ontario (aged 55-64 years) and 47% (aged 25-34 years) married outside their francophone cultural communities (Gray, 1994).

Canadian society, to continue to be attractive as a community within which to live and thrive, must constantly adapt. But adaptation certainly can not, and should not, in any manner imply diminution of the fundamental premises upon which the society was founded and from which it has matured. Tolerance and respect for the rights and differences of individuals were overwhelming "Canadian" identity characteristics proclaimed by large numbers of Canadians to the 1991 Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future. But tolerance must be coupled with respect and therein lies the historic problem for many persons in Quebec. To be perceived in numerous ways as "second-class" citizens within one's own country is intolerable.

Historically, those of the "dominant" culture (English language) and the dominant religion (Anglican in particular and Protestantism in general) were also largely dominant economically. The "British Empire", for which two World Wars, an Anglo-Boer war and numerous other international incidents, were fought lent symbolic support to the dominant culture. "The Motherland" (Great Britain) to which Canadians in large numbers paid deference, was not a "motherland" for *les canadiennes*. In many respects a global culture confronted an increasingly unique but isolated culture.

In recent years the issue has not diminished, in practise it has been exacerbated through continental free trade and increasing economic globalisation. The North America Free Trade Agreement places French language and culture in an even more precarious position because today the French languages is the **third** language behind English and Spanish in the move towards a continental and hemispheric market<sup>20</sup>. In the long-run, the people of Quebec will have to decide whether their language and culture can survive better

insulated from global and continental pressures by a tolerant -if not supportive- official Canada or, as a cultural island increasingly surrounded by a less hospitable English speaking community. The issue of federalism is extremely important and while many Canadians outside Quebec assume that Canada's federal relationship should appear to be, and function as if it were, symmetrical, it is highly improbable that anything less than formal asymmetry will both preserve Quebec's identity in general and its political relationship with Canada.

On the matter of asymmetry, it can be argued that from its inception Canada has been a federal system founded upon the improbability of "*fluctuating asymmetry*"<sup>21</sup>. Since Confederation in 1867, fiscal relationships have been characterised by "special" (often virtually secret) deals between provincial governments and the federal government. Provincial populations were regularly inflated in the 19th Century in order to ensure that, on a *per capita* basis, provinces received sufficient funds to maintain their viability. In fact, in 1907, the Constitution was amended and a formula inserted to guarantee that the province of British Columbia would receive funding from the federal Government equivalent to an existing population **even if that population diminished**. That same type of formula emerged in both the 1987 Meech Lake Accord and the 1992 Charlottetown Accord in respect to Quebec. Unlike 1907, however, the debates were public and in the end the formulas failed.

Quebec will conduct a referendum in 1995 on sovereignty. A Bill already has been tabled in the National Assembly of Quebec. This year, therefore, marks the turning point not only in terms of Quebec's relationship with Canada but in a more global sense, with the future and fate of French language and culture in North America.

I have no doubt that the French language and culture will survive in North America<sup>22</sup>. The question people in Quebec ultimately must face is whether their culture can thrive and provide them with the dignity of cultural identity. In my personal view, the interaction of the two founding European cultures is the unique quality of Canada. Like the Swiss, I very much doubt that the uniqueness which is "Canadian" would benefit from a diminution in status or dignity of either of the founding cultures. Multiculturalism will change and enhance Canada but the virtues of multiculturalism should not depreciate, in the long-run, the fundamental values of that unique cultural flavour so enjoyed by so many Canadians. Quebec stands uniquely poised to benefit from a vigorous pursuit of its cultural identity but its ultimate strength will rest in its continued association with a Canada -even one struggling to posit bilingualism- than as an island culture into itself.

***Table1***

**CULTURAL PLURALISM: DIVERSITY WITHIN UNITY  
- THE FEDERAL DILEMMA**

In 1994 Canada's population passed 28 million persons. In 1993, Canada welcomed 252,137 immigrants. The top 20 countries of origin were:

1. Hong Kong:	36,026	11. Jamaica:	5,907
2. India:	20,199	12. Yugoslavia:	5,861**
3. Phillipines:	19,417	13. Lebanon:	4,669
4. Taiwan:	9,797	14. Pakistan:	4,156
5. China:	9,353	15. Trinidad & Tobago:	4,117
6. Sri Lanka:	9,061	16. France:	3,955
7. United States:	7,933	17. Iran:	3,857
8. Vietnam:	7,812	18. Haiti:	3,616
9. Great Britain:	6,959	19. South Korea:	3,585
10. Poland:	6,823	20. Romania:	3,347
Total:	176,450		

\*\* Yugoslavia includes Serbia and Montenegro

**Viewed regionally, the figures offer a portrait of change**

1. Asia:	90,743
2. West Asia (India-Turkey):	54,422
3. Europe (including all Russia):	45,742
4. Caribbean:	16,382
5. Africa:	16,727
6. South America:	9,512
7. United States:	7,933
8. Mexico & Central America:	7,681
9. Australasia & Oceania:	2,995

SOURCE: "Geo-Map". Canadian Geographic (1994) 114(6): 18