Parti Quebecois and Quebec separatism

Michael Joseph Laslovich

The University of Montana

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd

Recommended Citation

https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/3180

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
THE PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS AND QUEBEC SEPARATISM

By
Michael Joseph Laslovich
B.A., University of Montana, 1976

Presented in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
1978

Approved:

Chairman, Board of Examiners

Dean, Graduate School

Date
8-10-78
ABSTRACT

Laslovich, Michael Joseph, M.A., Fall 1978 Political Science

The Parti Québécois and Quebec Separatism (113 pp.)

Director: Thomas Payne

Within the Canadian federation exists the predominately French-speaking province of Quebec. After more than one hundred years of membership within the Canadian federation, the Parti Québécois, the ruling party, is now calling for the political independence of Quebec. It feels that only through political independence can it ensure the continued survival and prosperity of Quebec's French culture. Continued membership in the Canadian federation, according to the Parti Québécois, would result in the assimilation of French Canadians into the English Canadian way of life.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the Parti Québécois's efforts to achieve political independence for the Canadian province of Quebec. The work includes a look at the history of the French-Canadian separatist movement, the development of the Parti Québécois along with its program, and an analysis of the potential for success of the separatist movement. This analysis of the Parti Québécois is based upon a general survey of existing literature and documents addressing this topic. Public opinion surveys, election analyses, party programs, and other relevant works are utilized.

Because of the current nature of the problem, a definitive prediction of the outcome is impossible. However, no matter what the outcome of the Parti Québécois's bid for independence, the Canadian federation will not remain unchanged. It is likely the central government will become more decentralized in face of Quebec's demands.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABSTRACT</th>
<th>ii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Chapter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separatist Option</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Assimilation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-Class Support for Separation</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II</th>
<th>FRENCH-CANADIAN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</th>
<th>24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Acts</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing Federal Power</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French-Canadian Nationalism</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingualism Policy</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>III</th>
<th>FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS</th>
<th>50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separatism and World War I</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separatism and World War II</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maurice Duplessis and French-Canadian Nationalism</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Lesage and the Quiet Revolution</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Union Nationale</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourassa</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Separatist Movement</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of the Parti Québécois</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV</th>
<th>PROGRAM OF THE PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS</th>
<th>71</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Separation</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving Independence</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Union</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Policy</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Policy</td>
<td>79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Political System</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Policy</td>
<td>84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique of the PQ Program</td>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V</th>
<th>CONCLUSION</th>
<th>94</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Viability</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of 1976 Victory</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIBLIOGRAPHY</th>
<th>110</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On November 15, 1976, the voters of the Canadian province of Quebec elevated the Parti Québécois to power, and in so doing brought forward the issue of independence. Although the phenomena of Quebec separatism is not new, its resurgence has caused grave concern both within and outside Canada.

The history of French and English Canadian relations has been marked by suspicion, misunderstanding, and sometimes even violence. French Canadians, though, have managed to maintain their culture in face of the assimilative pressures of the English-dominated country. Although French Canadians have employed various strategies at different periods, their primary goal has always been to preserve their French way of life.

The French-speaking citizens of New France became subjects of Great Britain as a result of France's defeat by the English in 1760. Ever since that time French Canadians have been concerned with the maintenance of their French language and customs.

French Canadians were most concerned with retaining as much freedom as possible to ensure the continuance of
their life as it had been for almost two hundred years. The British government tried to attract English settlers into its new colony by offering vacant lands free to ex-soldiers and easy terms to others. French Canadians did not favor the idea of English settlers invading their homeland, nor were English Canadians enthusiastic to venture to a land where they might be denied the customary rights of Englishmen. It was precisely when French and English Canadians came into contact that trouble began because of their divergent customs. English Canadians demanded that they receive their accustomed rights. Understandably, French Canadians interpreted almost any action of their English conquerors as motivated by contempt, superiority, or malice towards them. This unfortunate heritage of misunderstanding is the heaviest cross that Canada has had to bear and is one source of the current separatist movement.

The British government sought to impose modified English institutions upon its French subjects while granting rights to the French Canadians in hopes of winning their allegiance. French Canadians took advantage of such rights as elective assemblies, but only to the extent to protect themselves. They did not become active in national affairs but instead preferred to remain isolated, using those rights granted them by their English masters to protect themselves from outside interference. Ironically, measures designed to capture French-Canadian support, such as the Act of Union of
1840, were to later frustrate the wishes of English Canadians. French Canadians, however, clung to those measures advantageous to their cultural survival.

Contrary to the British government's expectations, French Canadians managed to keep their culture intact, a culture which had developed almost two hundred years in North America before the English conquest. Canada has always been forced to recognize the French fact and still must today.

The nature of the French Canadian changed drastically with the industrialization and urbanization of Quebec. French Canadians were no longer content only to utilize their provincial government in a negative manner; that is, in fighting off federal interference. Instead, they began to make demands upon their provincial government for positive action to ensure not only the survival, but the growth of their culture. As a result, the provincial government of Quebec, beginning with Jean Lesage in the early 1960s, made greater demands upon the federal government for more extensive provincial power.

French Canadians no longer tolerated English domination of Quebec business. For many years French Canadians were discouraged by the Catholic Church to choose careers in business. However, under the forces of modernization, the Catholic Church lost its powerful influence over Quebecers. Quebecers received training in those areas which they had previously shunned. Naturally, this new French Canadian middle class, made up of highly skilled individuals, sought employment in their French-
speaking province. They were frustrated when they discovered that many English-dominated companies which operated in Quebec would not hire them to fill top job positions because of their inability to speak English. Thus, in their own province, French Canadians were excluded from top positions because of their language. Although French Canadians realized that their language was a handicap outside Quebec, where they comprised a minority, they could not accept the idea that their language should hinder them in Quebec where French-speaking citizens comprised the majority.

One source of the current French Canadian dissatisfaction with the Canadian federation, therefore, is tied to economic considerations. French Quebecers resent that they are discriminated against because of their language in their own province.

This point is important to note: French Canadians are largely concentrated in the province of Quebec. This fact has aided in the amazing survival of French-Canadian culture in North America. Many French Canadians say they only feel at home in Quebec, that this province is their homeland. As a result, the fact that they should be discriminated against because of their language is unacceptable.

Fears of cultural assimilation have combined with economic considerations to make the option of political separation more appealing to French-speaking Quebecers. Today's French Canadian is faced with a dilemma. First and foremost,
throughout his history he has sought to maintain his culture. Today's French Canadians, however, are a modern people who want to develop fully to their potential. The dilemma arises from the fact that French-speaking individuals are being told that their language is a handicap to advancement in an English-dominated business world.

French Canadians want both. They not only want to advance economically, but they want to do it without the loss of their French customs. They do not want to grow economically at the price of cultural assimilation.

Pierre Trudeau, in keeping with his belief in the federalist solution, has tried to satisfy French Canadians through a policy of bilingualism. He has sought to make French-speaking Quebecers at home within the Canadian federation and not culturally threatened. Trudeau's policy has attracted criticism from both English and French Canadians. Some English Canadians feel it is a wasted effort; French Canadians should learn to speak English since it is the language of business in North America and of the vast majority in Canada. Many French Canadians, on the other hand, are irritated by what they feel is an unfulfilled policy. Still other French Canadians feel that bilingualism is only another attempt by English-speaking Canadians to assimilate French Canadians by giving them a false sense of security through the facade of bilingualism.

The political separation option for Quebec raises
a whole host of other questions, not only concerning the future of the Canadian federation, but also for the United States and the rest of the world. Among them are: "Can an independent Quebec survive economically?," "Would the remaining Canadian federation remain intact?," "Is separation legal according to the Canadian constitution?," and "What would be the ramifications of political independence throughout the world?" The merits of independence for Quebecers is also questionable. Would political independence really make a difference for the French-speaking members of Quebec, or would it only entail greater hardships for them?

The question of political independence for Quebec is thus very complicated. The purpose of this work is to focus on the Parti Québécois and its efforts to achieve independence for Quebec, since a study of all variables would require an enormous scope. A detailed study of the cultural, economic and world implications of Quebec independence must be left to others. This study includes a look at the history of the separatist movement, the development of the Parti Québécois from 1968 to 1976, the PQ program, and an analysis of the potential for success of the Parti Québécois.

This analysis of the Parti Québécois is based upon a general survey of existing literature and documents addressing this topic. Public opinion surveys, election analyses, party programs, and other works relevent to the Parti Québécois in its quest for political independence are utilized.
Because of the complexity of the French-Canadian question, only the political aspect of this problem is addressed. Hopefully others will find this work helpful in their attempts to discern the reality of the French-Canadian problem. The solution of the French-Canadian issue of separatism is important not only for Canadians, but for the rest of the world. Canada plays a major role in world affairs and any disruption in its internal affairs would have profound effects upon the world, especially the United States. Thus it is important that Americans understand the importance of French-Canadian demands for independence.

Separatist Option

Central to the purpose of the Parti Québécois is the issue of separation. Why does this phenomena exist in Quebec? According to one analysis:

The option of independence, usually called 'separatism' in English, has always existed in Quebec. At times expressed by isolated intellectuals, at times through armed revolt, the independence movement took the form of a group of intellectuals in the 1930's (Andre Laurendeau, Jean-Louis Gagnon, etc.), then of a series of political parties, for instance, the Rassemblement pour l'Indépendance Nationale and the Ralliement National, both of which participated in the general elections of June 5, 1966, and the Parti Québécois, which participated in the general elections of April 29, 1970. Although the programs of these movements and parties varied widely, they all contained one important element: the conviction that there is a complete lack of harmony between an existing - or emerging - society and the political and
other institutions which are - or should be - its framework, its tools, its indispensable aids.\textsuperscript{1}

The Parti Québécois contends that the institutions of a society must serve a majority of its inhabitants, but that under the current Canadian federal system the confrontation between a permanent majority (Anglophone Canadians) and a permanent minority (Francophone Canadians) makes the existing institutions undesirable for the French majority in Quebec. As Dr. Marcel Chaput, a prominent leader, states:

\ldots no matter which way you look at it, we form a powerless minority. You may say that the Quebec ballots decide the [national] vote. It has been true at times, but the 1957 elections put the lie to that belief. From now on, a political party can get itself into office at Ottawa and form a stable government without having to cater to Quebec. For this reason, 1957 is an important date in the history of French Canada.\textsuperscript{2}

Separatists are very pessimistic about their future in the Canadian federation. Although they have been able to maintain their unique culture, French separatists believe that it cannot be preserved under the continued association with English Canada. René Lévesque believes that, "For Quebec, in fact, independence is a vital necessity; for Canada, Quebec's independence is the prerequisite to a fuller development. For the two states this would provide a new and fruitful start. For we


are a deadweight on English Canada, and we ourselves lead a mutilated existence."

The question, "What does Quebec want?" has been asked by English Canadians throughout their association with their French counterparts. With the emergence of the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, Quebeckers were no longer satisfied to remain behind the negative nationalistic policies of their government. Quebeckers now wanted their provincial government to take an active part in protecting their way of life. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, then a law professor, thought that only through an active role in Canadian affairs could Quebec's French culture withstand the test against the English majority. He wrote, "... no constitutional reform - indeed not even a declaration of independence - could make French a majority language of business and industry in North America, or make Quebec a state capable of dictating its terms to the rest of the continent."

Separatists, represented by the Parti Québécois, disagree with Trudeau's federal solution. Today, according to one historian, "... the Québécois want to preserve the French language and culture, to control immigration, to establish an independent foreign policy, and to secure all they can from Ottawa.

---


now without relaxing the pressure for eventual separation."\(^5\)

There seems to be no hope for accommodation short of separation between Ottawa and Quebec in the view of Dr. Chaput: "The removal of each individual injustice suffered by the French-Canadians will not cause the idea of an independent Quebec to disappear. We want independence for a totally different reason. It is because dignity requires it. It is because of the idea that minorities, like absentees, are always wrong."\(^6\)

Sovereignty is for the PQ an essential condition for improving the collective life of the people of Quebec, who have always perceived that they are different from the rest of Canada, and have sought to maintain that difference. Some still argue for a special status for Quebec vis-à-vis the other provinces, but the PQ insists that the other provinces would not accept such an arrangement, and rightfully so. In the view of the PQ, independence offers much more, both to English and French Canada. As René Lévesque stated:

> The important thing for today and for tomorrow is that both sides realize that this regime [the Canadian Federation] has had its day and that is a matter of urgency either to modify it profoundly or to build a new one.

> As we are the ones who have put up with its main disadvantages, it is natural we also should be in the greatest hurry to be rid of it; the more


\(^{6}\)Chaput, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 5.
so because it is we who are menaced most dangerously by its current paralysis.\textsuperscript{7}

Lévesque believes federalism is only damaging an "... ancient hobble of a federalism suited to the last century ..." leading to a "... perpetual atmosphere of instability, of wrangling over everything and over nothing. It would mean the sterilization of two collective 'personalities' which, having squandered the most precious part of their potential, would weaken each other so completely that they would have no other choice but to draw themselves in the ample bosom of 'America'."\textsuperscript{8}

Yet anti-separatists feel just the opposite: that if Quebec leaves Canada, other provinces may follow suit, leaving the door open for the United States to absorb large areas of a dismembered federation. In their view, Quebec has played a large part in preventing United States takeover of Canada.

Again, what does Quebec want? According to René Lévesque, it first and foremost wishes to secure its "collective personality:" French language, customs and practices. This can only be achieved, the PQ asserts, by the complete mastery of every last area of basic collective decision making. Quebec must become sovereign as soon as possible. As a consequence, "... we finally would have without our grasp the security of our collective 'being' which is so vital to us, a security which otherwise must remain uncertain and incomplete."\textsuperscript{9} Also,

\textsuperscript{7}Lévesque, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{8}Ibid., p. 26.
\textsuperscript{9}Ibid.
in the process, English Canada would become free to develop, following any path it chooses.

The Parti Québécois believes that separation is not only necessary but inevitable, which has important consequences as far as the PQ's conduct is concerned. For example, Premier Lévesque has promised to hold a referendum on political independence. What if Quebecers should refuse to support independence? Mr. Lévesque says he will try again, assuming that if the people of Quebec are shown the merits of independence, they will naturally opt out of the federation. The PQ does not question the fact that independence will happen—only when.

**Language Assimilation**

Because of the PQ's concern with securing its collective existence, it is very concerned with preventing the forces of assimilation. One recent measure taken by the Parti Québécois has caused a great uproar throughout Canada as well as within Quebec; namely, the passage of Bill 101—the Official Language Act. This Act requires children of immigrants, whose mother tongue was not English, to attend French schools. In defense of this action, the PQ points to the rapid rate of assimilation of immigrants into the English culture. Most immigrants who come to Quebec send their children to English schools because they believe this will be more beneficial when their children enter the English-speaking dominated job market. Between 1945 to 1967 inclusive, Canada accepted about three
13

million immigrants. More than 35 percent, on the average, were of Anglo-Saxon origin. The total for the French was much less. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1

CANADIAN IMMIGRATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1966</th>
<th>1967 (9 months)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Immigrants</td>
<td>194,743</td>
<td>170,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of English Origin</td>
<td>71,505 (37 percent)</td>
<td>59,500 (35 percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of French Origin</td>
<td>6,675 (3 percent)</td>
<td>10,000 (6 percent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Of the thirty-five Canadian immigration offices, six are in the United Kingdom and Ireland, five in Germany, and four in the United States, while there had been only one in France until Ottawa opened two new offices in 1966.

Furthermore, countries and areas of the world which could provide excellent French-speaking applicants are completely neglected; there are no offices in Latin America, North Africa, in the Near East (except in Israel and Egypt), or in the French-speaking areas of Asia.

A new agreement between the federal government and

---

10 Glazier, op. cit., p. 154.
Quebec, signed February 20, 1978, will improve Quebec's ability to choose the immigrants who wish to settle in Quebec, while respecting federal responsibilities for the admission of immigrants to the rest of Canada. The agreement allows Quebec to establish its own system of points for admitting immigrants. Although this will be similar to the federal government's system of points criteria, which is nationwide, Quebec will be able to give extra weight to the ability of prospective immigrants to speak French or to be absorbed into the French-speaking community in Quebec. The new accord supersedes the one signed in October 1975, under which Quebec gave its advice on applications of immigrants destined to that province, but had no decision-making powers.

There are other measures which make it possible to give consideration to certain provincial priorities of Quebec. First are instructions to federal representatives abroad, since the passage of the new act making French the sole official language in Quebec (Bill 101), to advise immigrants destined to Quebec of the francophone character of the province and their obligation to learn French and send their children to French schools. Second, before an employment visa is issued for Quebec, the province is consulted in order to determine the social and cultural implications of admitting temporary workers. Finally, a number of federal programs designed to assist immigrant adjustments are also in line with Quebec's priorities in this field. In 1976 to 1977, Ottawa
spent $5,125,000 on language courses for immigrants. In Quebec's immigration orientation centres, 3,675 immigrants were given French courses during the year.\textsuperscript{11}

More recent figures on the percentage of French-speaking citizens of Quebec contradict separatist claims of rapid assimilation. According to National Health and Welfare Minister Monique Begin, the francophone majority in Quebec, which rose by more than 200,000 from 1971 to 1976, is now over five million.\textsuperscript{12} In the same five years, the anglophone and "other language" groups in Quebec have increased by barely 3,000 persons each, with the result that Quebecers, whose mother tongue is French, account for more than 30 percent of the population increase in the province over the past five years. Consequently, the French-speaking majority in Quebec grew from 80.7 percent of the total population of Quebec in 1971 to 81.3 percent in 1976.

The results, according to Minister Begin, are:

The actual state of affairs, then contradicts the separatist thesis but it does confirm that of the francophone federalists. The French fact is a solid and massive one, an irreversible one in Quebec, but it is more fragile and its position has not yet been consolidated in the other regions of the country. In fact, the analysis commissioned by the Federal Government from Rejean Lachapelle of the Institut de recherches politiques de Montreal indicates that the positions of the francophone minorities in Ontario


and New Brunswick have weakened in the past five years. In New Brunswick the population with French as its mother tongue has dropped from 34 to 33.6 per cent of the total from 1971 to 1976. In Ontario it has dropped from 6.3 to 5.7 per cent.

These trends can hardly move one to be complacent. There is most certainly a French-Canadian demographic problem, but it is in the anglophone provinces, not in Quebec. The separation of Quebec, in addition to meaning the setting in of demographic stagnation, would not resolve this problem in the least, but on the contrary, be absolutely catastrophic for the million francophones living in other provinces.\(^\text{13}\)

One of the major factors which precipitated the current crisis in Quebec, according to one authority, is the belief that the Québécois are an endangered species. The birthrate in Quebec has been declining since 1954, and the population of Quebec increased in the period of 1971 to 1974 by only 7 percent in natural increase (births over deaths), the lowest rate of any province in Canada.\(^\text{14}\) However, as one historian wrote, "The crisis of the cradle is a major force behind the rise of the Parti Québécois and will not be solved, or even ameliorated, by a change of government in Quebec. With 300,000 unemployed in Quebec in 1977, an increase in the birthrate is not a priority need.\(^\text{15}\)

**Middle-Class Support for Separation**

According to some observers, Quebec's demands for

\(^{13}\)Ibid.

\(^{14}\)Ibid., p. 154.

\(^{15}\)Ibid., p. 155.
separation are a result of a rising French-Canadian middle class. One political scientist states: "Quebec nationalism and separatism stem from the frustrations of young French-speaking managerial and professional people, particularly in Montreal, who wish to make their way in modern occupations but find advancement not fully possible in English-Canadian organizations." Another political scientist offers what he calls the "statue inconsistency hypothesis," which states:

... at some initial time, a dominant group A is high on achieved and ascribed statuses, and a subordinate group B is low on both. The mobility rate is near zero; there is intragroup status consistency and intergroup stability. At a later time, as mobility opportunities increase, some members of group B rise in achieved, but not ascribed status. Though now less absolutely deprived, they are more relatively deprived as group A becomes the comparison reference. Political nationalism, as one of the ideologies that legitimate conflict, arises when status inconsistent members of group B enter the power transition interval.

This middle class wants to bring Quebec fully into the urban, industrial, scientific age, but they want this to be done in French, according to French-Canadian values, in order to protect the integrity of French culture in Quebec vis-à-vis the rest of Canada.

During what has come to be known as the Quiet Revolution, the Liberal party became the political expression of the


17Wallace D. Lon, "Nationalist Attitudes in Quebec and Belgium," Journal of Conflict Resolution, June 1975, p. 221.
new middle class, as witnessed by the bureaucratic revolution under the forces of modernization. It has been stated: "Its election in 1960 publicly consecrated the political dominance of the new middle classes in French-Canadian society."\textsuperscript{18}

In the early 1960s, French Canadians had become discontented with the English dominance in Quebec. The Lesage government began a program calculated to realize the potential of French Canada and to ensure the principle of "maîtres chez nous." The program included the nationalization of the eleven power companies of Quebec and various educational reforms. The Lesage government sought to improve the position of the French Canadian within the framework of the Canadian federation. Its purpose was not only that French Canadians should have more control over the Quebec economy, but also that the French language should secure more recognition in the business life of the province. The middle class sought to expand its opportunities by opening new areas of employment that had been denied to French Canadians because of their language.

In the view of separatists, total social development for French Canada cannot be achieved because it lacks statehood. According to Dr. Chaput, "In the same way that complete loss of autonomy leads to assimilation, complete possession of

autonomy, called independence, leads to the flowering of a nation. ... Quebec's independence will insure our advancement by handing over to us the control of our own destiny."\textsuperscript{19}

Separatists believe the restricted employment opportunities of the middle class is a result of their lack of independence. However, if Quebec is to achieve independence, the Parti Québécois must enlist the support of other groups within Quebec, such as the working class.

Pierre Trudeau, while accepting the view that this new middle class is responsible for the Quebec separatist movement, has a very different impression of its motives. He states:

> The truth is that the separatist counter-revolution is the work of a powerless petit-bourgeois minority afraid of being left behind by the twentieth-century revolution. Rather than carving themselves out a place in it by ability, they want to make the whole tribe return to the wigwams by declaring its independence.\textsuperscript{20}

Another observer writes that:

> ... the forces released by Quebec's social revolution cannot achieve results fast enough to keep up with burgeoning demands. There must be, it is felt, some way to create heaven-on-earth overnight. Hostile forces must be at work hindering progress. There emerges, therefore, an analysis which is a melange of fact and frustration: the relationship to English Canada is the barrier to Utopia; political independence will clear the way.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19}Chaput, op. cit., p. 63.


Those advocating federalism believe that French-speaking Canadians can only maintain their identity by continued association with the remainder of English Canada. According to one political scientist: "One day Quebec will understand that it is only in profiting from all the possibilities of democracy that it will cease to be a permanent minority in order to become a minority which, in association with other minorities, will be able on particular questions to become a majority."\(^2\) Federalists argue that no matter how French Canadians change their political structure, not even a declaration of independence, will change the fact that French Canadians will always constitute a minority in an English-dominated continent. They warn French Canadians that separation from Canada will not act as a panacea, but in fact will cause French Canadians needless economic harm.

The Quiet Revolution has, in the view of many observers, set into motion a process that might result in the independence of Quebec. When French merchants and bankers went back to France after the English takeover of French Canada, they left the French with no one to manage their businesses. English bourgeoisie moved in and built up Quebec trade and banking. Today, a French bourgeoisie has come into existence composed of a modern complex form of executives and technicians who will no longer accept English domination.

The process of urbanization and development of a modern economy in Quebec, which has done more than anything else to undermine the older form of nationalism, i.e., isolationism, has created the pressures which lie behind the current independence movement of the Parti Québécois.

One political scientist writes:

Cases of conscious discrimination may be few, but there is inevitable unconscious discrimination since the ways in which the French employee expresses himself are often little understood by the English-Canadian superior. The predicament is therefore harmful or thought to be harmful to French Canadians' chances for promotion. And since the entering of a modern economy brings along with it the ambition to succeed and the normal expectations of rising, it can be a dramatic experience for a certain group if on entering this particular slot of 20th century society they find, or feel they find, the avenues closed to them because of a fact about themselves which their whole background has trained them never to give up, in any circumstances.

Insofar as they identify themselves as French Canadians, the members of Quebec's newly developed middle class are bothered by a sense of cultural inferiority in those fields that they prize; namely, industrialization, economic and social progress. Trudeau believes that the problems of the French Canadian can be best addressed through federalism. It has been pointed out, however, that "... such is the nature of this nationalist sentiment that it is not enough that these reforms came about. They must also be brought

about by the society itself and be purely its own responsibility." Therefore, the demand is not only for modernizing reform but for reform carried out by French Canada, and, according to one author, "... since this type of reform requires an increased intervention by the state, and since the state concerned must be identified as a French-Canadian state, the logic of the demand leads to the strengthening of the state of Quebec, and in the limiting case, independence for the province of Quebec."  

The Parti Québécois, which only ten years ago was a splinter group on the fringe of provincial politics, gained control of the Quebec provincial government by obtaining 41 percent of the popular vote in Quebec's 1976 election; enough to form a majority government. Soon the government will hold a referendum asking the people of Quebec whether or not their province should take the first steps toward becoming a new, independent North American nation. Although the PQ has captured control of the provincial government, its journey has only just begun. Independence for Quebec is the PQ's raison d'être and it must convince the rest of its citizens of the merits of independence. The main concern here is with the political costs of such an action as independence. Even if the Parti Québécois could guarantee Quebecers that an independent Quebec would survive economically, there still  

---

24 Ibid., p. 161.  
25 Ibid.
remains the question if the people of Quebec will accept the demands which independence would entail. An independent Quebec is not a panacea to all the problems of the French Canadians. As Marcel Chaput states: "... you would be wrong to think that I consider independence the solution to all of Quebec's problems; on the contrary, I believe that it would create many more new ones." Rather, independence is a means of addressing the problems of the French Canadian in North America. It is important to note that the political separation of Quebec from Canada is a means and not an end in itself. A free Quebec would entail a great amount of energy and work on the part of the Québécois, but the PQ wants a "French solution to Quebec's problems. The question remains if the French citizens of Quebec are willing to pay such a price, if they believe separation to be worthwhile. It is the self-proclaimed job of the Parti Québécois to convince its fellow citizens to strive to obtain this goal.

In order to understand the phenomenon of the Parti Québécois, the historical context of separatist movements and the PQ, its party program, and an analysis of its likelihood of success will follow.

---

26 Chaput, op. cit., p. v.
A brief review of French-Canadian history is helpful in understanding the position of the Québécois in Canada today. Running through English-French Canadian relations are themes which have had important consequences on the formation of the present separatist movement, namely French-Canadian resistance to pressures of assimilation by their English-speaking counterparts.

French colonists founded Quebec in 1608, just one year after English colonists established Jamestown. Over 150 years later, in 1760, New France (Quebec) was conquered by British forces. With the Treaty of Paris of 1763, Great Britain established ownership over most of Eastern North America. French colonists in Quebec became a conquered people but have amazingly resisted pressures of assimilation, consciously or unconsciously placed upon them. One observer writes: "Unlike the United States, Canada has never officially accepted the melting pot concept with respect to the various ethnic groups composing the population." 27 If it were not for this will for survival,

---

today's French Canadians would not be able to speak of separation. In fact, identifying oneself as a French Canadian would only be a phenomenon of the past.

A brief review of the history of French-Canadian relations with English Canada is important because the origin of many current problems of Quebec are a result of this relationship. A survey of the legislation of the British government concerning its French-Canadian subjects provides an insight into English attitudes.

**Legislative Acts**

**Royal Proclamation of 1763**

The details of British policy towards its newly acquired colony were outlined in the Royal Proclamation of 1763. Quebec was to be modeled after the other British royal colonies of North America. Quebec would observe English laws and be governed by an elective assembly. The English government hoped these provisions would encourage British colonists to settle in the newly acquired territory. While the Articles of Quebec's Capitulation provided for the free exercise of the Roman Catholic religion, the British government assumed, or at least hoped, that French Canadians would become assimilated into the British way of life. One French Canadian writes:

The evolution of this new British colony [New France], it was felt, would be similar to that of New York, first settled by Dutch colonists, and of New Jersey, which had been founded by Swedes. In less than a century, these two foreign collectivities had melted
away. The British conquerors of the St. Lawrence Valley sincerely believed that a similar fate awaited the Canadians.28

The aims of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, however, did not succeed in bringing about assimilation. One reason was that under British law Roman Catholics were ineligible to hold office or vote in the assembly. Since French Canadians were predominately Catholic, this provision prevented their participation in government.

The language barrier also prevented French-speaking Canadians from taking an active part in judicial or legal affairs since these were conducted in English. These conditions prevented the assimilation of French Canadians because they barred French-speaking members from participation in the system. John S. Moir and D. M. L. Farr suggest in their book, The Canadian Experience: "Common sense, political realism and simple justice to the French Canadians demanded a new constitution to ensure them membership on juries, protection for seigneurial rights, and use of their customary laws."29

Quebec Act of 1774

A solution for these problems was provided by the Quebec Act of 1774. This act restored something similar to that of New France's former constitution. A governor would rule through a


council, while the assembly provided for by the Royal Proclamation of 1763 was dismissed. Roman Catholics were now eligible to hold public office, even though they were not anywhere else in the British Empire. The Catholic Church was also given legal power to demand payment of the tithe (an assessment of one-tenth of the church member's income, which was used to support the Church and its clergy) and the seigneurs (feudal lords) resumed their pre-conquest status. Finally, Quebec was given the territory of the Ohio Valley.

The Quebec Act of 1774 has been called the "... Magna Carta of French Canadian national rights and privileges." The act removed the anti-French and anti-Catholic bias of earlier British policies. French Canadians were placed on an equal political and religious status with the English Canadians. As a result French Canadians obtained a means of maintaining their identity within the English household of their conquerors.

It was hoped that the Quebec Act would capture the support of French Canadians for the British government. This was not to be the case. When the thirteen American colonies revolted against Britain in 1776, the English government expected French Canadians to contribute to its forces in the campaign to suppress the uprising. Although French Canadians refused to support the American colonists, they were equally unwilling to fight for the British cause. Thus the Quebec Act, like the Royal

---

Proclamation of 1763 before it, failed to produce a feeling of French-Canadian loyalty to the British Empire. Although the Quebec Act ensured the protection of French Canadian rights, it was aimed at strengthening the ties between her and Great Britain. The approach employed by the English government had changed since 1763, but the end remained the same: to make French Canadians fit the fabric of their English counterparts.

Not only did the American Revolution result in the independence of the English colonies, but it also destroyed the basic assumption underlying the Quebec Act: that the province of Quebec would remain French in character. As a result of the revolution, many English colonists from America who remained loyal to the British crown (United Empire Loyalists) fled to Quebec. These new arrivals were predominately English Protestants and wanted the British government to enact new policies which would be more in line with their customs rather than those of the French. English Canadians, now in closer contact with the French, sought to restructure the government.

Constitutional Act of 1791

The answer to these demands was provided by the Constitutional Act of 1791. According to the provisions of this act, Canada was politically divided into two colonies--Upper (English) and Lower (French) Canada. Both were given elective assemblies, reversing the decision of the Quebec Act of 1774. Thus French and English could live under their own divergent customs.
Once again it seemed the British government had assured the French the right to maintain their unique identity by allowing them to choose their own elective assembly, but this was not the case. The Constitutional Act attempted to weaken the strength of the Catholic Church by establishing Anglicanism as the state religion. An Anglican bishop was appointed to Quebec and one-eighth of the Crown lands was to be reserved as an endowment for the support of the Protestant clergy.

However, the main consequence of the Constitutional Act was not anglicization but the renewal of the French Canadian separateness. The Act provided French Canadians with a geographical as well as a political base. One observer writes: "If the Quebec Act of 1774 guaranteed the survival of the French Canadians, the Constitutional Act of 1791 guaranteed the survival of French Canada."\(^{31}\) The granting of an Assembly to Lower Canada provided a major force in the development of the colony's political development. Another French Canadian observer writes: "Once given the vote and admitted to the assembly (privileges denied to Roman Catholics in Britain until 1829), the French Canadians dispelled any notions of their political indifference or ineptness by quickly learning to use the parliamentary system for their own ends."\(^{32}\) Though the Act provided for the establishment of a predominately British colony (Upper Canada), more

\(^{31}\text{Ibid., p. 98.}\)

\(^{32}\text{Moir and Farr, op. cit., p. 111.}\)
importantly for the future of the French Canadians it assured them of \textit{la survivance}. As was the case with the Quebec Act of 1774, the Constitutional Act gave French Canadians a means by which they could protect their unique culture.

\textbf{Revolt and the Durham Report}

Although both French and English colonists had acquired an assembly form of government, one problem still plagued both groups; the desires of the colonists could not be imposed on the executives. Britain still retained the power to appoint the executives of each colony and therefore had the final word in decision making for the colonies. In other words, the colonies had a representative but not a responsible (cabinet) government. Upper and Lower Canada were ruled by local oligarchies. In Upper Canada this group was known as the "Family Compact" and in Lower Canada its equivalent was the \textit{Chateau Clique}. The French Canadians of Lower Canada had greater reason for concern since the \textit{Chateau Clique} was disproportionately dominated by English-speaking Canadians.

In 1837, rebellion erupted in both Upper and Lower Canada as a result of the English government's failure to heed the Canadian colony's demands for elective councils. The British Parliament issued its Ten Resolutions of 1837 to this effect, which in turn sparked the revolt.

Other factors were also responsible for this outbreak of violence. Groups in Upper Canada felt the economic progress
of their province was being stifled by French-Canadian dominance. The more business-minded English Canadian believed that the isolationist-minded French Canadians were a detriment. Also, a recession had struck the colonies in 1836, along with crop failures in the Montreal-Richelieu area. Thus political, economic and racial problems combined to fuel the rebellion.

Although the rebellion was suppressed without much difficulty, it prompted an investigation by the British government into the problems of the colonists. The recommendations of that study, the Durham Report, demonstrate that the British government had not given up attempts to assimilate the French-speaking Canadians, even though provisions of previous acts had given French Canadians cultural guarantees and geographical sovereignty.

John George Lambton, first Earl of Durham, was sent by the English government to ascertain the problems of the Canadian colonies and make recommendations. On January 31, 1839, the Durham Report was released. It recommended the concession of effective self-government to be granted to the Canadians, the very measure which the colonists were demanding. "But if Durham favored self-government (or what is known in our history as responsible) it was only for government dominated by English-speaking people. It was the old policy of assimilation all over again,"33 writes one historian. A legislative union of the two Canadas would be formed with the hope that the combined

---

English-speaking majority in the two provinces would ensure the English domination of the colonies.

Understandably, the Report caused a wave of negative reaction among French Canadians. Although a major proposal of the Durham Report would provide a means for English domination of the French, its actual effect was to strengthen the efforts of French Canadians to protect their identity. According to one author, Durham's biggest mistake was based upon, "... this ... miscalculation ... that the French could be anglicized, that eighty years of British encouragement to French-Canadian nationalism could be reversed by a mere political decision."34

When Britain first obtained control of New France in 1763, it followed a policy of leniency and toleration. As time went on, the British government gave more authority to the French Canadians in an attempt to ensure their loyalty to the Empire, especially during the period of the American Revolution. Thus outside forces, such as the fear of revolt spreading from the American colonies to those in Canada, and the American invasion of 1812 to 1814, were as much responsible for the concessions to the French as was the concern for protection of their French culture. Within each measure enacted concerning the French Canadians was the assumption that French-speaking Canadians would be co-opted into the culture of their English-speaking contemporaries.

34Moir and Farr, op. cit., p. 147.
These actions demonstrate the misunderstanding which the British government possessed concerning their new subjects. French Canadians, above all else, have been concerned with protecting their unique cultural and racial identity. They gladly took advantage of those measures granted them by the English Parliament which they could utilize to protect their culture; for example, French language guarantees a government by an elected assembly. French Canadians utilized such measures to remain distinct from the rest of English Canada. The belief that all this could be changed by an act of government illustrates how naive the English government was concerning their French subjects.

**Act of Union of 1840**

The English government once again attempted to anglicize French Canadians by passing the Act of Union of 1840. When Britain acquired New France, it numbered less than the French Canadians in Canada. As time passed, many English came to feel their French counterparts were stifling their economic development. French Canadians were less interested in agricultural and industrial growth than were the English. Thus English Canadians sought a political arrangement to circumvent the power of French Canada. The Act of Union seemed to provide the best solution. The English government felt that,

The only way to defeat the French majority would be to crib, cabin, and confine it to Lower Canada; and this could best be done by preserving as distinct, political entities the two provinces which had been
proposed to obliterate and by giving each of them equal representation in the new legislature. Upper and Lower Canada were reunited and Upper Canada, despite its smaller population, was given equal representation with Lower Canada. Upper Canada's high public debt was also transferred to Lower Canada. Finally, English was to be the only official language.

Understandably, most members of Lower Canada viewed the Act of Union with hostility. They resented their reduced representation, the burden of Upper Canada's debt, and the obvious anglicizing purposes of the Act. Ironically, this blatant attempt of "enforced Anglicization" was later to backfire against the English when the English population surpassed the number of French Canadians. The advantage thus shifted to the French Canadians who, although they were now a numerical minority, still possessed equal representation vis-à-vis the English Canadians.

The Union lasted only twenty-five years and ended amidst cries of "No Popery" and "No French Domination" -- slogans of the Clear Grits Party of Canada West (Upper Canada) who were upset that French Canadians, now comprising a minority, held equal representation with the English-speaking Canadian majority. Now that English Canadians comprised a majority, they sought once again to change the political system so that it would be more advantageous to their interests. One author writes:

\[\text{35G. F. C. Stanley, op. cit., p. 100.}\]
Canada East's (French Canada) equal voice in the united parliament not only enabled it to stall progressive measures that Canada West deemed necessary, but even to impose its solution to Canada West's problems, as in the case of separate school legislation. Within the Union the two Canadas were equal partners politically, but Canada West, now larger in population and more dynamic complained of French domination and of minority rule.  

British North America Act

The late 1860s have been described as a period of stalemate between French and English Canadians. Several solutions were proposed, each aiming at solving the problem of French and English political relations. The existence of a strong French-Canadian minority continued to make its presence felt in the decisions of Canada.

The Clear Grits Party ("all sand and no dirt - clear grit all the way through"), under the leadership of Toronto journalist George Brown, advocated the principle of "representation by population." This policy sought to minimize the power of French Canadians who had become a numerical minority since the passage of the Act of Union in 1840. According to one political analyst:

Grittism began with a demand for simple, economical government and an extension of elective institutions on the American model. After George Brown, the publisher of the Toronto Globe, joined the movement, it took on a pronounced anti-Catholic tone. The fact that Upper Canada was growing more rapidly than Lower Canada but that the two sections had equal representation in the legislature

---

36 Moir and Farr, op. cit., p. 207.
gave the Grits a grievance which they exploited to the full in the cry for 'Representation by Population.' Against Macdonald-Cartier conservatism, which it declared to be a corrupt alliance of the Roman Catholic Church with the Bank of Montreal and the Grant Trunk Railway, the Globe championed the interests of 'the intelligent yeomanry of Upper Canada,' and at the same time supported the claims of Toronto as a commercial and transportation centre against Montreal.37

The demand for "Rep. by Pop." was vigorously opposed by French Canadians, who regarded the proposal as nothing less than an attempt to destroy French institutions and French rights in Canada.

The Clear Grits Party became one of the most dynamic movements in Canadian politics, driven by the issue of equal representation between Canada East and West. How could the representation of Canada East and Canada West remain the same while the upper province contributed two-thirds of the revenue and seemed destined by 1861 to out-distance the lower province in wealth and population? The Clear Grits Party objected to the wasteful duplication of expenditures, the "intolerable domination" of Canada East in forcing separate schools upon the upper province in defiance of the Globe's crusade against "state-churchism," and other evidences of the "subordination" which would continue to grow increasingly irksome with every cause.38


In 1861, Canada West voted 40 to 9 to break the equality of representation in the Canadian union and in 1864 a resolution to maintain that equality "inviolate" was lost in the House by a vote of 82 to 24.\(^39\) English Canadians demanded change.

John Sandfield Macdonald promoted the "double majority principle." This would ensure that no legislation could be passed for one section of the province without the approval of the majority of that section, thus restricting government measures to those which could command a majority in both sections of the province. This concept was deemed unacceptable because it was believed that it would tend to promote sectionalism and was counter to the institution of responsible government.

A federal solution was campaigned for mainly by John S. Macdonald. A source of continuing conflict between Quebec and Ottawa had been the difference of opinion between French and English Canadians as to the purpose of the federation. Finally, the alternative of separation of French and English Canada existed. Outside forces, though, made this alternative unattractive to both parties; namely, the fear of domination by the United States.

Each of these proposed solutions attempted to solve the French-Canadian problem. English-speaking Canadians were more concerned with establishing themselves in a position of political dominance than in respecting the rights of the French minority. French Canadians, on the other hand, sought to pro-

\(^{39}\) Ibid.
tect their unique culture. Federalism seemed to offer the only acceptable solution to both sides.

The stalemate was broken by "the great coalition" of 1864. George Brown and the Grits entered into a coalition ministry with their arch enemy Macdonald, described by one historian as: "... a tribute to the patriotism of George Brown. For him it meant the virtual wrecking of a party of which he had served as leader for many years." Brown sought to prevent a split between the two Canadas because he wished to maintain the British connection and wanted to promote the westward expansion of Canada. For both of these the continued association of the Canadas in the St. Lawrence system was imperative. Although this coalition did not last long, Brown's conduct made possible Canadian federation which in turn resulted in an entirely new alignment in Canadian political life.

Divergent French and English expectations concerning the value and purpose of confederation underlie the current problems between Quebec and Ottawa today. The continuing belief of the English Canadian, since the conquest in 1763 up to the Federation of 1867, that French Canadians would eventually become assimilated demonstrates their lack of understanding of the French Canadian.

English Canadians sought to establish a strong central government which would enable them to expand economically.

without the crippling opposition of any one province, specifically Quebec. Improvement of railway communications and westward expansion were examples of the developments sought by English-speaking Canadians. The political impasse which had developed between French and English Canadians under the Act of Union prevented English businessmen from developing such interests as these as quickly as they would have preferred.

French Canadians sought a weak central government, contrary to what English Canadians hoped for in confederation. Their main concern was to prevent the centralizing tendencies of a federation from usurping their authority and therefore threatening the survival of their French culture. French Canadians did agree to join the federation despite this fear because they felt more secure in an alliance with Britain rather than their neighbor, the United States. At least with the British they had extracted guarantees, such as protection of their language rights, while many feared the assimilative powers of the American democracy.

Ramsay Cook commented on the divergent views of the French and English Canadians, saying that, "Confederation has never held, for French Canadians, the same all-important place in the nation's history as it has for English Canadians. Indeed, some French-Canadian nationalist writers have viewed Confederation not as a triumph, but rather as a tragedy for
their people." Many French Canadians at the time felt they had little choice. An observer states: "Every pro-confederate French-Canadian speaker in the Canadian debate used lurid colours to depict the end of la survivance, of the 'French fact' in North America, if Canada were to be swallowed by the 'universal democracy' of the American Republic." G. E. Cartier, who helped persuade French Canadians to join the federation, said: "Absorption in conformist American democracy would certainly follow if the fabric of a new national state were not woven in the north." Still, many suspected the proposed federation as a plot to revive the anglicizing goals of Durham under a new disguise. Even today some French-Canadian nationalist leaders feel Cartier committed the original vendu (he sold out the French-Canadian interest).

Canada's federation, therefore, was partly established as a result of negative considerations. Both groups sought to protect themselves, but survival involved different considerations for each group. As one historian states: "For English-speaking central Canadians, survival meant expansion and accumulating sufficient strength to resist continentalism. For most French Canadians survival meant guarding their language, religion and laws in the region they already occupied."

43 Ibid., p. 127.
44 Ibid., p. 137.
Assimilation, though, was not the objective of the British North America Act. Protection of provincial rights is a major facet of its provisions. The B.N.A. Act explicitly guaranteed the rights of the French language and the establishment of separate schools for French-speaking Canadians. It has been noted that, because of French Canadian wariness of assimilation: "Whatever else Canadian federalism might mean, it was clear that it had to be free from any reasonable suspicion of being a device to bring about the assimilation of French Canada. . . ."\(^4\)

The British North America Act went into effect July 1, 1867. Such provisions as the power of disallowance and assignment of residual powers to the central government seemed to insure the dominance of the central government. According to the B.N.A. Act, any provincial legislation may be disallowed by the Governor-General-in-Council within one year of its receipt by the Federal government. Thus the cabinet has the power to render inoperative and void any provincial act, for any reason which may seem fitting to the federal government. Examples of reason for its use include contrary to sound principles of legislation, ultra vires, unjust, and discriminatory.

However, this was not to be the case, largely as a result of the decisions of the Judicial Branch of the British Privy Council, which acted as the final appellate court for

Canada from 1890 until 1949. Cases involving disputes between the central government and the provinces were consistently decided in favor of the provincial governments. As a result, power was shifted from the central government to its provincial counterparts.

Increasing Federal Power

Recently the Canadian federal government has gained more power relative to the provinces mainly as a result of World Wars One and Two and the Depression of the 1930s. Because of the extraordinary burdens these events placed upon Canada, the provinces surrendered many of their powers, for example, taxation authority, to enable Canada to deal more effectively with these crises.

Today many provinces, including Quebec, have difficulty in meeting their responsibilities because of a lack of revenue. As a result they are forced to rely upon grants and subsidies from the federal government to meet their obligations. Accompanying these funds are regulations imposed by the central government upon the recipient.

French Canadians of Quebec are extremely unhappy with this situation. Because of their deep concern for protecting their unique customs and language, they have sought to prevent as much outside "interference" as possible. The provincial government of Quebec has adopted the role as protector of French Canadian culture in Canada, which was once occupied by the Catholic Church, and therefore the provincial government of
Quebec has resisted what they feel is federal usurpation of their provincial governmental power.

An example of this behavior was the rule of Quebec's Premier Maurice Duplessis. He rejected all national plans that were based on a uniform treatment of the provinces, including the programs of the post-1945 tax rental agreements, the Trans-Canada Highway project, and federal aid to universities.

For most of their history of association with English Canadians, French-speaking Canadians have remained isolated within the province of Quebec in hopes of protecting their way of life. They only became involved in Canadian national policies which directly affected them. Because of this isolation, English Canadians in the past have not been very concerned with their French-Canadian counterparts. More importantly, it has resulted in the formation of unfavorable stereotypes of the French. Only the writings of extreme ultra-national groups received attention in English Canada. More moderate groups are seldom heard. English-Canadian attitudes towards their French citizens have been shaped mainly by memories of French-Canadian opposition, for example, the Conscription Crisis of 1914.

English Canadians are also partly to blame for this lack of understanding. According to one writer, the English "... believed that they were innately superior to all 'foreigners', and particularly to foreigners who did not
speak English or spoke it with an accent to them."\(^\text{46}\)

As this brief review has shown, most of French-Canadian history has been devoted to resisting the pressures of English-Canadian assimilation. French Canadians have utilized those opportunities which enabled them to sustain their unique culture, such as the Quebec Act of 1774 which placed French Canadians on an equal political and religious status with the English Canadians, the Constitutional Act of 1791 which provided a geographical as well as a political base for the French, and the Act of Union of 1840 which later provided them with equal representation even though they were to become a minority. It was through this defensive nationalism that French Canadians sought to maintain their identity.

**French-Canadian Nationalism**

Today, French Canadians are no longer willing to defer to the present English-dominated Canadian federal government. A new sense of nationalism has permeated the Québécois prompting some even to seek separation from the Canadian federation. One study conducted by a group of scholars, the Canada 70 Team, found that:

Today he [the French Canadian] understands. And his understanding is this, he is not, in fact, a minority within the framework or the country of Canada but rather one of two majorities. French Canadians have

awakened to this fact that they have political power as a homogeneous people with a territory and a government of their own.47

Bilingualism Policy

In the 1960s, the central government became concerned with the bilingual and bicultural problems in response to French Canadian demands. They sought to strengthen the concept of an equal partnership between the two founding races. In 1963, L. B. Pearson established a royal commission directed by Andre Laurendeau and A. D. Dunton, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, to investigate the current state of bilingualism and biculturalism and to recommend steps to strengthen the concept. In analyzing Canadian attitudes towards the bicultural problem the Commission concluded:

The chief protagonists, whether they are entirely conscious of it or not, are French-speaking Quebec and English-speaking Canada. And it seems to us to be no longer the traditional conflict between a majority or minority. It is rather a conflict between two majorities: that which is a majority in all of Canada, and that which is a majority in the entity of Quebec.

That is to say, French-speaking Quebec acted for a long time as though at least it had accepted the idea of being merely a privileged "ethnic minority." Today, the kind of opinion we met so often in the province regards Quebec practically as an autonomous society, and expects her to be recognized as one.

This attitude goes back to a fundamental expectation for French Canada, that is, to be an equal partner with English-speaking Canada. If this idea is found to be impossible, because such

equality is not believed in or is not acceptable, we believe the sense of deception will bring decisive consequences. An important element in French-speaking Quebec is already tempted to go it alone. 48

Incompleteness of bilingualism is a source of irritation for Quebecers. Yet any extension of the use of the French language annoys certain groups in the other English-speaking provinces. One English Canadian writes:

However well-intentioned, the move to save Confederation by attempting to implement a policy of official bilingualism was doomed from the very start by the failure of its proponents to recognize one vital fact. Canada is not a single state inhabited by two principal peoples, spread across the land. . . . Instead, Canada is divided geographically into two entirely regional cultures, the attempt to introduce the alien language into each of the regions is bound to be unwelcomed and, in the cause of the English-speaking section which constitutes the vast majority of Canada, totally impractical. 49

Others oppose the policy of bilingualism for different reasons. According to one writer, bilingualism "... sanctifies the separation much more than doing away with it." 50 Dr. Marcel Chaput, on the other hand, believes bilingualism is "... a meaningless word, a sin against nature," 51 that French Canadians are, "... shut up in the vicious circle of


destructive bilingualism." 52 Many separatists fear that bilingualism will only lead to assimilation, that in claiming that French Canadians have rights throughout Canada, English Canadians seek only to disperse French Canadians from Quebec and thereby assimilate them. According to René Lévesque: "... instead of strengthening Quebec, they talk of a revival of French-Canada outside our borders. Let us say very, very calmly: what they are proposing to us now is a sucker's game. . . ." 53

According to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism Report:

Whenever a bilingual state preserves the integrity of its language groups, the tensions that might arise are neutralized to the extent that each of the groups within the state has a sense of cultural security. When a country fails to provide this sense of cultural security, the minority, seeing its language threatened, often tends to harbour feelings of hostility toward the majority and to look for other solutions, including various forms of 'national' self-determination outside the framework of the bilingual state. 54

It is this lack of cultural security which is spurring many French Canadians toward separatism. Many French Canadians feel that the central government's policy of bilingualism is only an attempt to achieve assimilation.

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau disagrees. He writes:

____________________
52 Chaput, op. cit., p. viii.
I am afraid that excessive preoccupation with the future of the language has made certain people forget the future of the man speaking it... no constitutional reform - indeed not even a declaration of independence could make French a major language of business and industry in North America, or make Quebec a state capable of dictating its terms to the rest of the continent.\textsuperscript{55}

Precisely because French Canadians are such a small minority in Canada, as well as in North America, Trudeau feels they cannot enclose themselves within Quebec. Rather, Prime Minister Trudeau writes, "... Canadian federalism is ideal. The federal system obliges Quebec's political culture to stand the test of competition at the federal level, while allowing Quebec to choose the form of government best suited to its needs at the provincial level."\textsuperscript{56}

Trudeau and those who advocate the federal system feel that the only way French Canadians can survive and prosper in their minority status is to compete with the rest of North America in which they are destined to live. Trudeau, however, acknowledges that, "... the whole citizenry must be made to feel that it is only within the framework of the federal state that their language, culture, institutions, sacred traditions, and standard of living can be protected from external attack and internal strife."\textsuperscript{57}


\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., p. 33.

\textsuperscript{57}Ibid., p. 193.
Thus the stage is set between the federalists and those advocating political separation for Quebec. Separatists believe that federalism is an obsolete political framework which does not represent the best interests of the people of Quebec. Within this environment of political dissatisfaction, the Parti Québécois has risen to power. The circumstances of its formation and development is important in assessing its future.
CHAPTER III

FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE
PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS

The call for political independence for the province of Quebec is not a new phenomenon. Ever since Britain's victory over the French in 1760, some French Canadians have argued for the independence of Quebec.

Separatism and World War I

In 1917, during Canada's participation in the First World War, violence broke out between French and English Canadians. During the course of the war, French Canadian enlistments, which were never high, began to dwindle. There were many reasons for this: the overwhelmingly English nature of the armed forces, the lack of French Canadians, and the belief that it was a war to preserve the British Empire. French Canadians, who had been cut off from Europe since 1759, were not as anxious as English Canadians, many of whom had just arrived from England, to fight in defense of Britain. More and more enlistments were needed as the war continued. In an effort to prevent the need for conscription, French-Canadian leaders, such as Laurier and the Catholic Church hierarchy, campaigned
for the French to volunteer. Finally, in 1918, the federal government felt that conscription was necessary and Prime Minister Borden announced that it would soon be initiated. The reaction in Quebec included riots, attacks on pro-government newspapers, and mass demonstrations.

During this period, the Deputy of Lotbiniere of the Legislative Assembly (the former name of the National Assembly) proposed the expiration of the federal pact of 1867 in order to take Quebec out of the federation, "... if the other provinces find that Quebec is an obstacle to the union, to the progress and development of Canada." Although the proposition was not carried out, the idea of political independence had once again been introduced. Fortunately, the war soon ended and the crisis was over for the time being. However, the memory of the conflict still remained and would fuel bitter feelings on both sides in future disagreements.

Separatist sentiments arose again in 1939. The newspaper La Nation published a letter by Lionel Grouix, who advocated the idea of provoking the dismemberment of Canada. The chief editor of La Nation, Pierre Chaloult, declared in his editorial: "It is understood, we are separatists!" La Nation declared itself an instrument for the movement of political separation for Quebec.

---

59Ibid.

Separatism and World War II

New difficulties arose between the two linguistic groups during the Second World War and again revolved around the issue of conscription. When Canada entered the Second World War in 1939, Prime Minister Mackenzie King did not want to prompt the recurrence of the 1917 crisis and hence he promised not to institute conscription. The demands of total war, though, soon outran voluntary enlistment just as it had done in World War One. The Conservative opposition and other elements, including the military, demanded that conscription be enacted. Prime Minister King, in order to avoid another full-scale crisis, sought a national referendum to permit the government to back out of its promise to French Canada. The referendum proved to be a disaster. French Canadian groups such as La Ligue pour la defense du Canada, supported by the lower clergy, campaigned for a non vote, although this action was contrary to the wishes of the politicians and the upper hierarchy of the Catholic Church. In the eight English-speaking provinces the vote went 80 percent in favor of the referendum; in Quebec it was 72 percent against and among
French Canadians in Quebec the non vote rose to 85 percent.\footnote{Richard Van Loon and Michael Whittington, The Canadian Political System, Environment, Structure, and Process (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1976), p. 70.} Opposition to the war in Quebec was polarized by the campaign and statements on each side grew more bitter. La Ligue grew stronger and became a political party; the Bloc Populaire.

The government managed to avoid imposing conscription until 1944, when it finally appeared that King could no longer satisfy both English and French sections of the party and country. French-Canadian leaders realized that it would be better to have limited conscription under King than full conscription under the English-dominated government that would replace him should his government fall. Although a full-scale crisis was avoided, again an air of mistrust remained between French and English Canadians. Fortunately, the war was by now almost over and it did not become necessary to send any of the draftees into battle.

\textbf{Maurice Duplessis and French-Canadian Nationalism}

French nationalism found expression in the formation of the Quebec provincial party, L'Union Nationale, led by Maurice Duplessis. Duplessis was elected in 1936 on a program of provincial rights and opposition to the federal government and English-owned business. With the sole exception of 1939 this appeal led him to victory in every election until 1958. During
his administration, conflict frequently arose between the federal government and Quebec, usually with the province protesting against alleged encroachments on provincial jurisdiction, especially concerning federal anti-depression measures. According to one author: "This institutionalization of French-English conflict was important in keeping some sort of restraint on French-English relations during most of the Duplessis period." With the exception of the 1944 conscription crisis, the most visible expressions of the English-French cleavage were arguments which broke out in federal-provincial conferences and the speeches of Duplessis which attacked the federal government.

Jean Lesage and the Quiet Revolution

The immediate postwar period and the 1950s was a time of apparent calm in Quebec, except for the occasional attacks of Maurice Duplessis against the federal government. However, things were not as calm as they seemed. Quebec society had been going through a period of rapid urbanization and industrialization and Quebecers were becoming more and more disturbed with the growing economic dominance of the English Canadians, both within and outside Quebec.

What has come to be known as the Quiet Revolution started with the death of Maurice Duplessis in 1959. His successors were unable to establish the tight control that he had

---

\[61\text{Ibid.}, p. 69.\]
been able to establish over Quebec. In 1960, the Union Nationale was finally defeated by the Liberal Party, lead by Jean Lesage, under the campaign slogan, maîtres chez nous (Masters in our own house). Lesage advocated "positive Québécois nationalism" rather than the negative policies of Duplessis. The Lesage administration favored expanded government participation in the economic affairs of Quebec, which included the nationalization of eleven power companies with the formation of Quebec Hydro. René Lévesque, at the time Minister of Natural Resources, was instrumental in nationalizing Quebec's hydroelectric power.

The purpose of this nationalization was not only to achieve more control over the Quebec economy, but also to ensure the recognition of the French language in the business life of the province. Commenting on the nationalization, René Lévesque wrote:

Our long-range and not-so-long range objective is to take over the economic life of Montreal as of the rest of the province on the basis of something com­parable to what we represent in the province because people are more important than business, and as people we are 80 percent. And no self-respecting people in the world ever accept to be something like a servant in his own homeland.

The Lesage administration also advocated greater governmental participation in education. The Department of

---


63 Ibid., p. 545.
Education was reorganized and unified, with the consequent transfer of responsibility for education from the church to the state. Government control over the universities was also increased. During Lesage's administration, Quebec's annual budget grew from 600 million to over two billion dollars; health, education, and welfare replaced roads and agriculture as top priorities. Lesage also proposed the improvement of the position of the French within the federal framework. The forces of separatism, however, were making their presence felt. Starting with a pamphlet called *Pourquoi je suis separatiste* by Marcel Chaput, a disaffected scientist with the federal Defense Research Board, and carrying on with a wave of terrorism under the Front de Liberation du Quebec (FLQ), separatism gained in strength in Quebec. Marcel Chaput writes: "In short, we want independence for Quebec because it would represent liberation, internationalism and a springboard into the whole world, whereas present Confederation, from our minority, means isolation and stagnation."^{65}

In the election of June 5, 1966, the Lesage administration was defeated by Daniel Johnson's Union Nationale. However, during this time, an important group of Quebecers felt the need

---


to alter the trend of Quebec nationalism. According to an observer:

Some of the prime intellectual movers of the Quiet Revolution, notably Pierre Elliot Trudeau and his closest associates, became concerned that the combination of head-strong Quebec nationalism and Ottawa's highly pragmatic flexibility was eroding the federal system. They determined to enter federal politics in the November, 1965, elections to halt this process, and make Ottawa a more effective counterweight to Quebec City.66

The Union Nationale

Some observers have stated that the Union Nationale's victory of 1966 was a result of outdated electoral laws which favored rural areas.67 Others think the surprise defeat of the Liberal government was a popular reaction against the Quiet Revolution and a return to the gloomy conditions that had marked earlier Union Nationale administrations. This was not the case. The electoral statistics indicate that the public gave less support to the Union Nationale in 1966 than in 1962. Its share of the vote dropped from 42.1 percent to 40.9 percent, while the Liberal share fell from 56.4 percent to 47.2 percent.68

Therefore, the Union Nationale did not defeat the Liberal administration by taking away its electoral strength, the outcome was rather a result of the efforts of two separatist parties, the Ralliement National (RN) and the Rassemblement pour l'Independence


67 Ibid., p. 16.

68 Larocque, op. cit., p. 78.
Nationale (RIN). Together these two parties captured 8 percent of the popular vote and brought about the defeat of Liberal candidates in a number of constituencies. "Yet," writes a political scientist, "these two parties, particularly the RIN, were dedicated to speeding up the Quiet Revolution, not to stopping it. Their goal was not to retard the construction of a national state in Quebec, but, on the contrary, to develop it as an independent national entity."\(^{69}\)

Daniel Johnson died in October 1968, leaving observers wondering if he had promoted separation or continued federation. At the Dominion-Provincial Conference on February 6, 1968, Johnson proposed a "special status" for Quebec, which Justice Minister Trudeau opposed. Jean-Jacques Bertrand, Johnson's successor and a committed federalist, was defeated in the 1970 elections by the Liberal Party under the leadership of Robert Bourassa.

**Bourassa**

Bourassa wanted a strong Quebec, but one that would remain within the Canadian federation. He devoted his administration to solving Quebec's problems through financial and economic means rather than legal formulas. Bourassa argued that separatism would destroy the economy of Quebec and

\(^{69}\)Ibid., p. 79.
drastically alter the standard of living of the Québécois. One observer notes: "It was economics that won the election for the Liberals, but economics may yet be the reason why Quebecers opt for independence."\(^7\)

**The Separatist Movement**

One of the main problems which has plagued the separatist movement in Quebec was the splintered leadership. The separatist movement consisted of a number of highly diverse groups advocating independence. In 1957, Raymond Barbeau formed the Alliance Laurentienne, a rightist group with clerical and corporatist tendencies, which had few members. During September of 1960, a leftist group, the Action pour l'indépendence du Québec (ASIQ) and the RIN were established. Marcel Chaput was vice-president of the RIN and ran for the Quebec Legislative Assembly, but the RIN, a pressure group rather than a political party, refused to get directly involved in Chaput's campaign. Chaput was defeated and, angry with the RIN, formed the Parti républicain du Québec (PRQ), the first separatist political party. Raymond Barbeau, his Alliance Laurentienne faltering in 1962, requested that his members join the PRQ, but the PRQ itself only enjoyed a short existence because of financial difficulties.

The fragmentation of groups devoted to separatism

---

continued. In 1963, the **Front de la liberation québécois** burst onto the scene. Composed of a small group of middle-class youths, they sought to achieve the independence of Quebec through terrorism. Most of its members were arrested. The **Armee revolution québécois** sought to replace the FLQ but never was very active. Other minor separatist groups of the 1960s included the **Parti socialiste du Quebec** (PSQ) which split as soon as it was formed into three groups: the **Parti Pris**, a radical party which appealed mainly to intellectuals; the **Phalange**, an extreme right-wing group founded by Leo Tremblay; and the **Chevaliers de l'independence**, organized by a professional boxer named Reggie Chartrand. Also, a splinter group of the RIN formed the **Regroupment national**, lead by René Jutras, a physician who felt that the RIN was being won over to Communism. Jutras emphasized the old Quebec values of the Catholic Church and the family.

In the 1966 elections there were three separatist parties: the RIN, the **Parti socialiste du Quebec**, and the RN. The RN had resulted from a merger of René Jutras **Regroupment national** and a group of dissident members of the provincial wing of the Creditiste Party - which had in turn split away from the national Social Credit Party. The Creditistes were led by Laurent Legault who acted as co-chairman of the RN along with Jutras. The RN was largely rural and conservative while the RIN, like the Liberal Party, was centered in Montreal and other urban districts. While the separatist parties
received 10 percent of the vote among themselves, they received no seats, symbolic of the fact that the separatist movement was ineffective because of its lack of unity. The separatist movement in the early 1960s was lacking in unity of policies and leaders. René Lévesque united these diverse elements by 1968 under the Parti Québécois.

Creation of the Parti Québécois

It was during the latter part of the 1960s that the Parti Québécois would find its roots. In 1964, a political observer of Quebec politics wrote that one essential ingredient which the separatist movement lacked was that of a charismatic leader. 

Rene Lévesque has filled this void.

A popular news commentator, René Lévesque first entered politics in 1960 when he ran for the Quebec provincial legislature as a candidate of the Liberal Party. Lévesque won the election and was named Minister of Public Works and Hydraulic Resources. It was in this post that Lévesque proved to be a major force behind Quebec's nationalization of its electric companies.

Lévesque openly called for the separation of Quebec from the Canadian federation in 1967. According to his plan Quebec and the remainder of Canada would split and then reunite in a common market, thus English and French Canadians

71William E. Griffith, "Quebec in Revolt," Foreign Affairs, October 1964, p. 35.
would each be governed as they wish while preserving the prosperity of each within North America.

Lévesque believed that the separatist movement in Quebec resulted from cultural considerations and that the French Canadian would only survive if Quebec had complete sovereignty. The Liberal Party, however, would not accept Lévesque's thesis and therefore he resigned on October 14, 1967. One month later, along with Gerard Belanger, Lévesque formed a separatist pressure group called the Movement souveraineté-association (MSA).

In April of 1968, the MSA held a convention in which one thousand of its 7,500 members attended. During the course of the convention 1,145 new members joined. It decided that its political plan for separation would focus on the establishment of an independent Quebec through friendly negotiations with Ottawa. It pointed to the precedents of the separation of Norway from Sweden, Hungary from Austria, Pakistan from India, and Ireland from Great Britain. According to its plan, the state would have control of all the means of education, communications, and information. French would be the only official language and the language of work in Quebec. The economic plan looked forward to a state in which the government was seen as the prime mover of the economy. Private industry would be allowed to continue but would be strongly regulated.
By May of 1968, the MSA claimed to have 10,073 dues-paying members. In order to consolidate the power of the separatist movement the MSA negotiated with the other main separatist groups: the RN and RIN.

The RIN, with 13,000 members, disagreed with the MSA on a major point: the status of English-speaking Quebecers. The RIN believed that Quebec should be unilingual and that there should be no governmental support given to English schools. René Lévesque and the MSA, on the other hand, thought English schools should continue to receive aid. These negotiations were abruptly broken off June 24, 1968. Pierre Bourgault, leader of the RIN, had called for a demonstration against Prime Minister Trudeau. The demonstration got out of hand and ended in a bloody five-hour riot. Therefore the MSA broke off the negotiations.

In August of that same year negotiations resumed between the MSA, the RIN, and also the RN. The RIN still demanded the establishment of an unilingual Quebec and thus withdrew from the negotiations over this issue. The Ralliement national was a rural-based group described as a populist movement. Their leader, Gilles Gregoire, claimed to have 23,000 members but only 4,665 members could be found at the time of the convention. The MSA, however, had grown to 15,546 members.

On October 14, 1968, the convention ended with the formation of a new party, the Parti Québécois. The only
major change made was that the Bank of Quebec would supervise banking and credit instead of the Bank of Canada in cooperation with Canada in order to satisfy former members of the RN. René Lévesque was elected president with Gilles Gregorie as vice-president. Within a week the leaders of the RIN suggested that it should dissolve itself and join the PQ as individuals, which it did.

The PQ seems to have provided the separatist movement with an effective political party organization. Some observers believe, however, that if the citizens of Quebec would reject a referendum on separation, the Parti Québécois would disassemble. One author states: "One may suspect that the PQ, perceived as a gathering of people sharing a specific political goal without necessarily agreeing on basic ideological points, will have problems of survival if ever the independence option meets with failure." Thus, some observers feel that the political realignment in Quebec is not over.

1970 Election

"In 1970, Quebec's traditional two-party system was superseded by a multi-party system as two parties obtained significant proportions of the popular vote," writes one political observer. Those two parties were the Parti


Québécois and the Ralliement Creditiste. (See Table 2). Only six years later the Parti Québécois would capture enough support to gain control of Quebec's provincial government.

The Union Nationale, under the leadership of Jean-Jacques Bertrand, had controlled Quebec since 1966 when it had defeated the Liberal government of Jean Lesage. During that election, separatist parties had managed to gather 9 percent of the vote.

Premier Bertrand set the tone of the 1970 election when he announced that the election would be considered "partly as a referendum" on Quebec's role in the Canadian federation. On this issue, the Parti Québécois believed Quebec should separate, the Union Nationale said perhaps but not yet, and the Liberal Party thought that Quebec should remain in the federation, since it felt independence would mean economic disaster.

The PQ's popular support in the 1970 election rose to 23 percent from 6 percent in the 1966 elections, quite a sizable gain. Some observers, however, question the validity of these results in relation to gauging the true strength of support for the PQ's call for independence. According to one author: "Strangely enough, many of those who stated that they planned to vote for the PQ did not approve of separation: 15.4 percent agreed with separation, 46.2 percent more or less agreed, 30.8 percent disagreed and 7.7 percent gave no reply.

74 Hagy, op. cit., p. 267.
### TABLE 2

THE RESULTS OF THE 1966 AND 1970 PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS IN QUEBEC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>1966</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Nationale</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.I.N.('66)-Parti Quebecois('70)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.N.(’66)-Ralliement Creditiste('70)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NUMBER OF SEATS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>1966</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Nationale</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.I.N.(’66)-Parti Quebecois('70)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.N.(’66)-Ralliement Creditiste('70)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in a survey conducted by the Montreal Star."75

Although the PQ gained 23 percent of the popular vote, it only received seven seats in the National Assembly while the Union Nationale, which received 20 percent of the popular vote, gained 16 seats. Why this lack of seats for the PQ? As a result of Section 80 of the B.N.A. Act, many English-speaking counties in Quebec are protected. In other words, smaller rural districts have more electing power than larger urban districts. As a result, while the Liberal party won 67 percent of the seats, it only received 45 percent of the popular vote.

Although the Liberals won the election, they were placed in a position of having to live up to their promises or face defeat. According to one author:

The separatists in 1966 had elected no members. In 1970 the Parti Québécois sent seven deputies to the National Assembly. With their popular vote, the separatists were the second in 36 other counties, although in 13 of these they were a weak alternative. Had the near-victories in the other 23 counties been victories, the PQ would have elected 30 members. In each of these ridings, they lost to Liberals and thus the Liberal representation would have been reduced to 49. In every case where the PQ placed second, except Rouyn-Noranda, they lost to Liberals. Therefore if the Liberals do not live up to their promises, the PQ will be quite likely to capitalize on their mistakes.76

75 Ibid., p. 270.

76 Ibid., p. 272.
1976 Election

The elections of 1976 were to prove quite different from those of 1970. What accounted for this change?

First, there was a lack of support for Liberals as shown by polls taken prior to the election. An April poll by the Centre de recherches sur l'opinion publique (CROP) showed the PQ with 41 percent of the popular support, leading the Liberals with 28 percent. The Liberals immediately replied by publishing the results of another survey, conducted by the Institut québécois de l'opinion publique (IQOP), showing that the PQ was trailing the Liberals 43 to 38 percent. To clarify this discrepancy, La Presse ordered a Gallup Poll in May, which confirmed the large lead of the PQ (44 percent to 33 percent).

The Liberal party itself was responsible for the rise of discontent. Many of its members, at one level or another, were found to be implicated in scandals and corrupt activities.

Second, the economic situation was worsening. The rate of unemployment rose to its highest level since World War Two. One political analyst states: "This factor worked against the Liberal government especially as it claimed to be the best one, under Bourassa's leadership, to cope with Quebec's economic difficulties." Charges of poor management were leveled against the Liberal administration in the handling of the Olympic

77Hudon, op. cit., p. 20.
installations and of the James Bay hydroelectric development.

Third was the prominence of social tensions within Quebec. The controversial language act, Bill 22, left English Quebecers with the feeling of betrayal. It declared French the official language of Quebec, but at many points indicated where English could be used, at the discretion of some authority or other. It is the vagueness of these discretionary powers that upset many in minority groups. The bill established French to be the language of instruction, but school boards can provide instruction in English with the approval of the Education Minister. However, for a pupil to be enrolled in an English language class, he must have "sufficient knowledge" of that language first--otherwise the student starts out in French.

The recent dispute between the federal government and air traffic controllers and pilots posed once again the question of the status of the French language in Canada. The federal government's reductions by 20 percent of the production quotas of milk producers also produced discontent in Quebec's rural areas.

It has been suggested that,

In fact, there were in Quebec 'two different electoral campaigns' in October and November 1976. The outcome shows that the PQ benefited most from the political situation just described. However, at the level of the electorate, the reaction was expressed in two different ways. While Bill 22 and the necessity of stopping the PQ represented the most important issue for the Anglophones, the Francophones were more concerned about the bad
economic situation and the weakness of Bourassa's leadership. This was apparent in the electoral choices: the PQ became the major party for the Francophones while Anglophones continued to elect mainly Liberals, while switching for a significant part to the Union Nationale (U.N.), thereby electing a few U.N. candidates.  

One magazine reported: "The major reason behind the PQ triumph was the six and one half years often inept and inefficient Liberal Party rule." Comments such as this reveal a shadow of doubt in the minds of writers on the true support for independence advocated by the Parti Québécois. However, before drawing any conclusions on the likelihood of the PQ's success, a look at its party programs will be helpful in this analysis. The assumption is made here that the probability of the PQ's success will depend on how well the PQ can present its case to the citizens of Quebec, which is the purpose of their party program.

78 Ibid., pp. 20-21.

CHAPTER IV

PROGRAM OF THE PARTI QUEBECOIS

Four centuries of common history have formed French Quebecers into a nation, which has always contained in its bosom a large minority of people from a variety of backgrounds, whose basic rights it has respected more than most other nations. This founding people has always manifested the desire to develop its own, distinctive culture. But it has become obvious, with time, that this objective can only be achieved if it has full control over the reins of its political life.80

This passage introduces the official program of the Parti Québécois, adopted at the 6th National Convention held in Montreal May 27-29, 1977. Today, in the Federal Parliament, Quebec has only 74 out of a total of 264 members and at most federal-provincial conferences, Quebec finds itself at odds with the other ten governments. It is precisely this situation which the Parti Québécois seeks to change. The PQ, tired of French Canadians occupying a minority position vis-a-vis the English-speaking Canadians, has called for the political independence of Quebec. In its view, federalism has only proven to work against Quebec's best interests.

Political Separation

The first plank of the Parti Québécois program calls

for political sovereignty for Quebec to be achieved through democratic means; i.e., a referendum. The Parti Québécois bases its belief of the right of Quebec to self-determination on Canada's membership in the United Nations and commitment to the U.N. Charter, which recognizes the right of all peoples to self-determination.

Achieving Independence

The Parti Québécois has always maintained that it intends to achieve independence through democratic means while respecting the rights of its neighbors. The PQ has promised to hold a referendum concerning independence sometime during its first term in office, when it judges it most opportune. If Quebec citizens support political independence, based upon a referendum to that effect, the PQ would propose to the National Assembly a law authorizing it to request from Ottawa the repatriation of all powers, except those which both governments will jointly agree to entrust to a joint commission for the purpose of economic association. The PQ would enter into technical discussions with Ottawa on the orderly transfer of powers. If Ottawa should refuse to enter into such negotiations, Quebec would, "Systematically exercise all of the powers of a sovereign state in the event that it should have to act unilaterally," according to the PQ program.

During the remainder of the present political regime, the PQ would promote Quebec's independence as much as possible. This would include obtaining recognition for Quebec by other states and requesting admission to the United Nations. The PQ would submit to the Quebec people a national constitution drawn up by citizens at the county level and adopted by their representatives at a constituent assembly.

**Economic Union**

The Parti Québécois has called for an economic association between Quebec and the remainder of Canada in order to assure the financial security for both parties. Rene Lévesque writes: ". . . there is no reason why we, as future neighbors, should not conform to the second great trend of our times; the new economic groups, customs unions, common markets, etc." The proposed economic association would include the coordination of fiscal policies between an independent Quebec and the remainder of Canada.

The PQ prefers this arrangement because of the high degree of economic integration which presently exists between Quebec and Canada. It also believes that such an association would not compromise Quebec's political independence since both governments would be dealing from positions of sovereignty instead of the current majority-minority status of English and French-speaking Canadians.

Although the PQ believes an economic association would
make things easier for both Quebec and the remainder of Canada, it does not think it is absolutely necessary for the survival of an independent Quebec. This position is not surprising since the PQ would not want to base the feasibility of its survival as a free country on the consent of Canada to an economic union.

According to its program, the PQ would:

1. Recognize to what extent Quebec's economy is integrated with Canada's (and, especially, with Ontario's) and the mutual benefits to be gained by maintaining the free circulation of goods between these two markets. This would entail a renunciation, by both sides, of the idea of creating tariff barriers between the two trading partners, and the establishment of a special system for agricultural products.

2. Discuss and conclude a customs union treaty formalizing this reciprocal agreement, if such is the desire of the parties involved, and harmonize and co-ordinate Quebec's institutions and economic policies with those of both but, at the same time, protect Quebec's interests.83

Rene Levesque writes: "Such an association seems to us, in fact, made to measure for the purpose of allowing us, unfettered by obsolete constitutional forms, to pool our stakes with whatever permanent consultation and flexible adjustments would serve our common economic interests. . . ."84

---

83 Official Program of the Parti Quebecois, op. cit., p. 25.
84 Levesque, op. cit., p. 29.
Economic Policy

According to the PQ, Quebec's economy is on the decline because of the domination of foreign companies. It believes that for all intents and purposes, there are virtually no francophones in the key decision-making positions, thus Quebecers have little to say in how their economy is run. For the most part, French-speaking Canadians occupy only salaried and lower levels of the work scale in Quebec. Therefore, the PQ would repatriate the main decision-making centers, primarily with the help of public and cooperative enterprise. Public authorities would be given additional resources, such as extensive financial backing, a means of economic intervention, an economic development plan, and controls on foreign investment and the financial system.

Quebec's economic policy would be based on human and social considerations by establishing an economic system that eliminates all forms of worker exploitation and meets the real needs of all the Quebec citizens rather than the demands of a privileged economic minority. The PQ would see that the economy is run more democratically by encouraging collective forms of organization and guaranteeing worker participation in the decision-making process. All citizens would be ensured a minimum income, and health, housing, education, work, and justice would be considered as basic rights to all. Social progress would be considered more important than economic progress.
According to the PQ, Quebecers are the most heavily taxed people in all of Canada, mainly because of the costly duplication of the many services inherent to the federal system. René Lévesque writes:

The two levels of government, which each collect about the same amount of taxes, operate in more or less the same areas - mainly because the federal government is constantly trying to butt into Quebec's jurisdictional area, but also because Quebec finds it necessary to duplicate federal services in order to promote the interests of Quebecers which otherwise would be abandoned or looked down on by Ottawa.85

The duplication of the tax system also creates further complications. Since taxpayers are no longer able to judge the equity of the system, they no longer know if the services they are receiving correspond to their share of the tax burden.

This theme of waste as a result of duplication inherent in federal systems runs throughout the program of the Parti Québécois. More importantly, the PQ thinks the services which the federal government does provide to Quebec are not in Quebec's interest. Therefore, the PQ wants to repatriate all tax revenues presently collected from Quebecers by Ottawa and provide Quebec citizens with all the services currently supplied by Ottawa. By this method, Quebecers would be assured of their taxes being allocated according to their best interests.

85Official Program of the Parti Québécois, op. cit., p. 17.
Business

The Parti Québécois thinks that it must occupy a greater role in regulating the Quebec economy. One measure which is of great concern to outside investors, and thus is very important for future economic investment, and the economic viability of an independent Quebec, is the creation of an investment code to govern companies whose shares are held by nonresidents. Within the limits of the code, the PQ would encourage foreign investment in the Quebec economy by developing as many sources of foreign capital as possible by distinguishing three categories of investment in keeping with the economic sectors that are affected.

The first category would exclude any foreign participation in what are considered vital sectors; for example, cultural affairs, radio and television, publishing, or in the industrial sectors in which company activities should be restricted in keeping with the public interest—for example, iron ore mining.

The second category would allow foreign participation on a minority scale (less than 49 percent), although this percentage could vary according to the area when the production, the technical staff available, and the expertise required permit the creation of groups of whom a majority are Quebecers.

The third division would allow foreign participation on a majority scale (up to 99 percent) in sectors that have
no real influence on the direction of the economy: sectors that are largely dependent on external markets for selling their products and in which Quebec does not occupy a competitive position, and sectors in which technology is used that Quebec does not have. Dividends paid by companies controlled mainly by foreign interests would not be allowed to amount to more than half of the profits after taxes earned in Quebec. The majority of workers of such companies would also be required to be Quebeckers. Such companies would be granted a reasonable delay in order to conform to these regulations.

Any transaction that would place a company in the hands of foreign interests would have to secure permission from the Council of Ministers. The Society of Industrial Reorganization would take over any profit-making company that would close or move out of Quebec. If the workers thought such a move to be advisable, they could buy back the company. Any intervention by the Society for Industrial Reorganization would aim at putting an end to what the PQ calls emotional blackmail too often used against workers of governments.

The Parti Québécois acknowledges that Quebec has serious economic problems. It holds these, however, to be a result of the state's inability to create a coherent development program because of the inefficiency caused by the division of state powers between two levels of government.
According to the PQ, Ottawa and Quebec often pursue different objectives or cancel each other's efforts by lapsing into insoluble jurisdictional disputes. In order to solve these problems, Quebec must decide for itself what courses of action to follow to ensure its best interests.

**Cultural Policy**

The issue of cultural maintenance is one of the main concerns of the Parti Québécois. According to the PQ's program: "Education and culture, the tools of man's liberation, are a basic prerequisite for human government - an important factor in any society's social and economic development." Some measures which have already been taken by the PQ provincial government have caused great controversy; for example, its language Bill 101.

**Language**

According to the Parti Québécois:

In most countries, companies operate in the language of the majority and immigrants naturally become integrated with the linguistic group of the majority - which occupies most of the important positions in the society. In comparison to these countries, Quebec looks more like a colony: francophones who have the same amount of education as anglophones clearly occupy more than their fair share of low-income jobs; conversely, anglophones have more than the lion's share of important positions, and have traditionally demonstrated a presence disproportionate to their numbers in advertising, newspapers,

---

86 Ibid., p. 18.
radio, and television - thus contributing to the anglicization of Quebecers. In nine cases out of ten, immigrants have integrated into the English-speaking group.87

Members of the Parti Québécois fear that if such a process continues, francophones will become a minority in Montreal within a generation.

Therefore, the PQ has called for measures that will ensure the superiority of the French language. One measure would make French the only official language of Quebec. At the end of a five-year transition period, French would be the only language of the State, its public bodies, and institutions.

Other measures include the requirement that all contracts between individuals, as well as companies, be drawn up in French unless all parties involved express the desire to use another language, and the use of French in all deliberative assemblies and minutes of meetings, except for ethnic groups of a cultural nature. Company names in Quebec would have to be French, along with public and private signs. Efforts would be made to ensure that streets and squares are given French names with the exception of a few cases of historic significance, and that all labels, directions, and printed or engraved signs be made French. French would also be the language of internal communications, negotiations, and collective agreements in all companies operating in Quebec.

87 Ibid., p. 41.
Under the threat of heavy sanctions and the obligation to compensate for any harm caused, employers would be prohibited from refusing, without cause, to hire employees who only spoke French, or to dismiss employees because they only know French. The use of a foreign language would be restricted to specific needs; for example, tourism, foreign trade, and employers would be required to provide proof of the need to use a foreign language. All Quebecers would be guaranteed the right to be served in French. Persons providing goods and services would first be required to address clients in French.

The anglophone minority would be provided with English language education at all levels subject to the following provisions: The Ministry of Education could grant English-language institutions to the anglophone minority, provided that teaching in such institutions was carried out partly in French and that all pupils or students demonstrated a suitable knowledge of the French language and Quebec culture in relation to their intellectual development. Access to English-language institutions would be restricted to children attending such institutions at the time the language law went into effect, their brothers and sisters, the descendants of citizens who had conducted their elementary school studies in English in Quebec, or were doing so at the present time.

All new immigrants, regardless of their mother tongue, would attend French schools and foreigners who came to Quebec to study would only be admitted to English-language institutions
if they were prepared to assume all of the teaching and administrative costs.

Through such measures as these proposals ensuring the supremacy of the French language, the PQ hopes to stem the tide of language assimilation and to establish French as the working language of Quebec.

The Political System

President

The Parti Québécois would establish a republican government with a presidential system. The president would act as both chief of state and as head of the government. Election would be by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term and the president's mandate could only be renewed once. In case of death, incapacity, or resignation, he would be replaced by a vice-president who would be elected at the same time as the president.

Presidential powers would include: naming the ministers and secretaries of State, who could not also be members of Parliament at the same time, suggesting to the National Assembly nominations for Supreme Court Justices, and the power of veto. The veto power, however, could be rendered null and void if the laws were adopted on second reading in the National Assembly by a two-thirds majority vote. The president would also have the right of reprieve.
National Assembly

The National Assembly, also to be elected by direct universal suffrage, would vote the budget and all credits, exercise control over the executive, convene and question ministers and secretaries of State, establish a system of permanent, specialized parliamentary commissions, and vote on all bills, including bills coming from the executive. The National Assembly would have the power to override the president's veto by a two-thirds majority vote. It would also have the power to revoke (impeach) the president, requiring a three-quarters majority vote.

The PQ also pledges to pass a general law on referendums which would ensure that the options offered would be clear and unequivocal, and would be formulated in such a way as to allow for a true choice.

Citizenship

When Quebec declares independence, says the PQ, it will recognize as Quebecers all Canadian citizens residing in Quebec, including new Canadians. Landed immigrants would follow the normal procedures for obtaining citizenship, under the Quebec regime, and any rights they had acquired would be respected in keeping with the immigration laws in effect when Quebec attained sovereignty.

Public Administration

With the attainment of independence, the government of
Quebec would have to deal with new responsibilities which, up until this time, have been handled by the federal government. One such area is that of an efficient public administration. One criticism of the political independence option for Quebec has been that if Quebec were to leave the Canadian federation, many of the English Canadians now occupying top positions in Quebec's managerial and administrative levels would leave, thus leaving Quebec in a difficult position. In order to ensure an amount of continuity, at least in governmental administrative positions, the PQ says it will integrate federal employees and civil servants residing in Quebec, who so desire, into Quebec's civil service without any loss of financial benefits; their salary range would remain unchanged and any pension and retirement funds, as well as the contributions paid by the employer would be transferred to Quebec through negotiations with the Canadian government. All fringe benefits acquired would be retained and, if necessary, an indemnity would be paid to cover moving expenses. Thus the PQ hopes to persuade some of the present federal civil service employees to continue their work for an independent state of Quebec.

**Foreign Policy**

An independent Quebec would have no intention of shutting itself off from the world and retreating to within its borders; rather, it would participate fully in international
life. According to the PQ program, Quebec's foreign policy would rest on these basic principles: safeguarding the interests of the Quebec people, peace, collective security, the necessary interdependence of peoples, recognizing the value of the economic and sociocultural contributions of other states, and the solidarity of the Quebec people with the developing nations.

Therefore, the PQ pledges to promote the freedom of nations and respect for their national character (which is what the PQ is demanding for Quebec) as well as international cooperation. It would also reject all forms of neocolonialism by keeping an eye on investments and the conduct of Quebec business abroad. The PQ would refuse to support regimes that do not respect the United Nations Charter on Human Rights and respect the principle of noninterference in the domestic affairs of another state.

A free Quebec would seek to establish friendly relations with the international community and consider as priorities the replacement of preferential ties with the Commonwealth by close relations with francophone countries, the establishment of close relations with the Third World countries, especially with Latin America, and the maintenance of close ties with Canada and the United States.

The PQ would practice a peaceful foreign policy based on rejection of the use of war to solve international disputes. Therefore an independent Quebec would advocate disarmament, the
banning of nuclear tests, the use of nuclear arms and germ warfare, and the reevaluation of military alliances in light of these principles. Military spending would be substantially reduced, replacing traditional armed forces with territorial defense units which could also be used for non-military purposes such as fire-fighting, and could collaborate with the United Nations in a peace-keeping capacity.

Finally, the PQ would create a research and surveillance unit, which would be under the control of the National Assembly, whose purpose would be to prevent political interference of multinational companies in the State of Quebec. Thus the PQ wants to ensure that Quebeckers will have full control over their affairs.

**International Consequences**

An independent Quebec would entail serious international consequences and therefore the PQ had assured its neighbors, especially the United States, that it would not threaten their security. According to its program, the PQ says it will respect those treaties binding Quebec and Canada which are favorable to Quebec and revoke others in accordance with the rules of international law.

Territorially, Quebec would claim all of its territory including Labrador and the islands off the New Quebec coast, the continental shelf, the 200-mile coastal limit, the so-called "federal" parks and the Quebec part of the area around
the national capital. It would also reclaim as Quebec territory the Artic islands and territories that presently belong to Canada by virtue of the same title as other Nordic countries. If no agreement can be reached on these questions, the PQ says it will occupy these areas through legal means (granting concessions, setting up institutions, etc.) and then taking the case to the International Court of Justice.

Critique of PQ Program

The Parti Québécois has been criticized by anti-separatists both within and outside Quebec for advocating political independence while not having detailed the means by which Quebec would survive if it were independent. In answer to such criticism one PQ member responds: "In the beginning, we must be content to establish a solid general outline for the required structure, without losing ourselves in the details of short-term or piecemeal economics, the factor always picked-on by the timid when they want to frighten themselves, and by the 'others' when they want to frighten us." René Lévesque agrees, claiming that these objections are raised in an attempt to confuse the issue of independence, calling them scare tactics while acknowledging that the "take-off" (independence) is a gamble.

However, predictions of economic doom, should Quebec

leave the Canadian federation, still cast a shadow of gloom over the option of political independence. One observer states: "The separation of Quebec from the rest of Canada would leave the Québécois in misery, poverty, and unemployment." He points out that approximately 35 percent of the burden paid to the provinces of Canada are given to Quebec while Quebecers contribute only 25 percent of these payments. Thus he concludes that the economic cost of separation for Quebec would be prohibitive.

The PQ says it will seek the establishment of an economic union with the remainder of Canada. But would the rest of Canada agree to such an arrangement? Some observers, mainly English-speaking, do not think so, because of the ill feelings which are sure to accompany a breakup of the Canadian federation. Others point out that neither Quebec nor the rest of Canada would give the other party veto power on tariff policies and trading arrangements with other foreign nations.

According to the PQ, neither side would like to see the loss of the other's market. Quebec would not want to lose the large Canadian market nor would Canada want to lose its access to the Quebec market. Quebec purchases two dollars of goods from English Canada for every one dollar of goods that

---


Quebec sells to English Canada. Therefore, the Parti Québécois foresees little difficulty in obtaining Canada's acceptance for the proposed economic association once political separation becomes a fact. One observer writes: "Indeed, the probability of that event [political separation] may depend to an important degree on the likelihood that a Quebec-Canada customs union can be established, or at least to the degree that the Parti Québécois can convince the Quebec electorate that it can be established."\(^{91}\)

Referendum

When the PQ first came to power, it promised to hold a referendum on political independence within two years, but it has postponed the date to a time closer to the end of its five-year mandate. Asked to comment on Lévesque's decision, Prime Minister Trudeau replied: "I suppose he is beginning to realize that it is going to be a tougher and longer process than he had bargained for to convince Quebecers to vote for independence, and I suppose that confirms my view that Quebecers will not be easily moved, to vote for independence... ."\(^{92}\)

Mr. Lévesque has said that he foresees a long pre-referendum campaign, which in fact has already started.


\(^{92}\)Canada Weekly, February 9, 1977, p. 8.
When asked why the PQ is going to wait, he replied:

To give you a simple part of the answer, we have not yet devised the rules for holding a referendum on a Quebec-wide level. We're working right now on basic referendum legislation.

Even more important, perhaps, we have not yet had a chance to spell out the economic and other aspects of the Quebec situation. That takes some time. We've just started to tell our side of the story.93

The proposed referendum has been the subject of great concern. Some observers claim that the Liberal government was responsible for its own defeat in 1976 because of its mismanagement of affairs. Because of the PQ's promise to hold a referendum on the question of separation, many non-separatists were enabled to vote for the Parti Québécois to register their protest against a corrupt Liberal government, while still permitting these same voters to veto the option of political independence when such a referendum would be held. Therefore, some political observers believe that the proposed referendum allowed the PQ to capture support in its election victory in 1976 that it would otherwise have not received, but that this element will not necessarily support the PQ's quest for independence.

The wording of the referendum itself has become a source of contention. Those opposed to Quebec independence fear that the referendum will be worded in such a way that it will be misleading, that it will not offer a clear-cut choice,

and thus will not reflect the true support for separatism among Quebecers. There has been discussion of the federal government holding its own national referendum on the question of national unity. This would allow the federal government to decide on the wording of the referendum and possibly rob the separatist movement of its momentum if such a referendum were to result in the rejection of the separatist option.

Important for the Parti Québécois is the apparent acceptance by the federal government of recognizing the opinions of the Quebec citizenry. Prime Minister Trudeau has stated that if indeed the citizens of Quebec do vote in favor of separation by a significant amount, negotiations between the federal and Quebec governments will follow. Although Prime Minister Trudeau does not believe in separation as an acceptable alternative, he does admit that "all is negotiable" as far as the Canadian constitution is concerned. These negotiations, according to Trudeau's plans, while not leading to political separation, would involve revamping the Canadian federation to ensure the cultural rights of the French Canadian.

Lévesque, on the other hand, unequivocally refuses to engage in negotiations concerning the current federal framework of Canada because he no longer believes in the ability of the federation to protect Quebec's interests. Lévesque has said that perhaps he would enter into discussions that
seek a profound realignment leading to a new form of Canadian confederation, but it would be necessary that this structure be a true association of two sovereign states.

Therefore, prospects for negotiations leading to the restructuring of the Canadian federation if the separatist referendum were to succeed seem to be slim at the present time.

**Conclusion**

Running throughout the Parti Québécois program is the belief that Canada's federal system is obsolete. The PQ repeatedly states that the present federal system robs Quebec of the needed tools to handle its problems. Rather, federalism results in the interference by the federal government into the affairs of Quebec, as demonstrated by endless jurisdictional battles and the duplication of services between the federal and Quebec governments. Many times these two levels of government pursue different objectives and therefore their activities sometimes cancel out each other's efforts.

While the Parti Québécois does not claim that problems would be easily solved if Quebec were independent, it firmly believes that its problems cannot be solved by someone else; namely, the English-dominated federal government. The Parti Québécois contends that independence is a precondition to a solution to Quebec's problems in such a way as to serve the
best interests of French Canadians. This is the main point of the PQ program: French Canadians must have complete control of their destiny; i.e., they must control all decisions made affecting them, if they are to survive and develop according to their French culture. According to the PQ, only through political independence can French Canadians secure their continued existence. Will the people of Quebec be convinced by the PQ's argument for independence?
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The Parti Québécois is seeking to preserve the French culture of Quebec citizens, a goal of Quebecers ever since their conquest by the English. At first, la survivance was based upon a policy of isolation within Quebec. Quebecers only became involved in national politics when they felt their rights were threatened. French Canadians learned to take advantage of rights granted them by the British Parliament. The Quebec Act of 1774, which placed French Canadians on an equal political and religious status with English Canadians, and the Constitutional Act of 1791 which provided French Canadians with a geographical as well as a political base, are illustrative of this point. Although the British government tried to foster assimilation, Quebecers succeeded in maintaining their unique way of life.

The establishment of the Canadian federation of 1867 did not change the situation. Although English and French Canadians joined together, their motives differed. English Canadians sought a means to pursue economic expansion without interference from the French Canadians. French Canadians, on the other hand, wanted to preserve their identity and felt,
in face of the overwhelming assimulative pressures which con­
fronted them from the United States's "melting pot", believed
that membership in the Canadian federation would at least ensure
Quebecers of language and cultural rights which they had already
secured from the British government.

This contrast of motivations for joining the federation
by English and French Canadians has posed problems for the func­
tioning of the Canadian political system in the past and certainly
provides an important component in explaining the current strength
of the Quebec separatist movement lead by the Parti Québécois.
In the past this "negative" attitude on the part of Quebec's French
Canadians has prevented their active participation in national
politics. Although English Canada has been at times frustrated by
the lack of consensus between their positions and that of Quebec,
for example, during the Conscription Crises of World War I and II,
they were not challenged to the extent to which they are today.

Presently, however, the supporters of the Parti Québécois
are not challenging specific policies of the federal government,
but are instead questioning the legitimacy of the Canadian federal
system itself. French Canadians object to their position as a
"permanent minority" within the federal system. According to one
author, those advocating Quebec separatism see "...the problem of
French Canada as that of a nation, with a common culture and
language, but lacking the instruments of government necessary to
promote its national aspirations."94 Thus Quebec separatists seek

94 Alex Macleod, "Nationalism and Social Class: The Unresolved
Dilemma of the Quebec Left," Journal of Canadian Studies, vol. 8,
no. 3, December 1975, p. 15.
to ensure a "French" solution to their problems. No longer are they tolerant of the English-Canadian domination of their lives, which they feel threatens the continued existence of their unique way of life. In the past, French Canadians relied upon their Catholic Church as protector of their culture. Today, that reliance has shifted to Quebec's provincial government. For the Parti Québécois, the recuperation by the Quebec government of the major instruments of political decision making is essential for the establishment of a society where all individuals can achieve full self-determination. It seeks to escape the frustrating political majority/minority situation in which French Canadians find themselves. According to the PQ, Quebec is so different that its demands cannot be met within the present Canadian federation, but must be allowed to go completely its own way.

Will the Parti Québécois succeed in attaining political independence for Quebec? Commenting on the possibility of an independent Quebec, René Lévesque writes:

At first sight, this looks like a dramatically rapid development, this burgeoning and flowering over a very few years of a political emancipation movement in a population which, until recently, was commonly referred to as quiet old Quebec. But in fact, its success would mean, very simply, the normal healthy end result of a long and laborious national evolution.\(^{95}\)

Was the PQ's electoral victory a result of Quebec

---

\(^{95}\)René Lévesque, "For an Independent Quebec," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 54, no. 4, July 1976, p. 735.
support for separation or was it of dissatisfaction with the previous Liberal government? Most observers, including René Lévesque, believe that the PQ election of 1976 was not a mandate by Quebecers for separation. One writer notes:

Lévesque's party won power by soft-pedaling secession and promising good, honest government. Since then, polls show that only a minority of the Province's population - 5 million French-speaking citizens and 1 million Anglophones - has been won over to the idea of independence.

Even this minority is shrinking. A sampling in July showed 70 percent opposed to separation compared with the 62 percent against the idea last April 1977.96

René Lévesque promised, during the 1976 campaign, to hold a referendum on the question of independence. Because of this stipulation, some observers have stated that Quebecers voted for the PQ with the knowledge that they would have the opportunity to reject the option of political independence while still supporting the Parti Québécois. Therefore not all PQ supporters were endorsing Quebec separatism in 1976.

The PQ played down its separatist goals and concentrated on provincial issues, attacking Liberal Premier Robert Bourassa's government for Quebec's 10.1 percent unemployment rate and alleged corruption in government. In fact, during the 1976 provincial campaign, only 7 percent of the Quebec public regarded separation as the prime issue.97 One historian writes:


René Lévesque, leader and founder of the PQ, knew that those who voted PQ were not necessarily separatists; a poll taken just before the election revealed that only 18 percent of the Quebec electorate were in favor of separation. Lévesque had not concentrated on the issue of separatism but had attacked the Liberal government for its inefficiencies, mismanagement, and disregard of the basic social issues in Quebec; unemployment (10 percent of Quebec's labor force compared with an average of 2.6 percent for the rest of Canada), labor unrest, continual strikes, and the huge deficit of the provincial government. Thus, those who voted for responsible government with a concern for social and economic issues and not primarily for separatism. 98

Then just how much support for political independence does the PQ actually have? According to one political scientist: "Clearly, most of the independists are Parti Québécois supporters, but not all Parti Québécois supporters are independists... This situation adds to the difficulty of assessing the strength and predicting the progress of the independentist movement." 99 Exemplary of the confusion over the support for independence is a poll taken just one week after the election which showed that only 11 percent of Quebecers favored separatism. 100

Therefore the true strength of separatist support among Quebecers remains unclear. Federalists contend that the

---


100 Kenneth M. Glazier, op. cit., p. 154.
citizens will not support the separation of Quebec from the Canadian federation, while the PQ claims they will if they are sufficiently informed of the merits of independence. At this point, no one can say positively which way Quebecers would vote on an independence referendum. The answer to this question must await the outcome of the proposed referendum, provided that the referendum is worded in a form which provides a clear choice between separation or continued membership in the federation.

As a result, the Parti Québécois is very concerned about the timing and wording of the independence referendum. The rejection of the independence option would be a very serious blow to the continued existence of the PQ. Lévesque has said if the PQ fails this time, it will try again, until it accomplishes its goal.

It is improbable that the Parti Québécois would be able to convince Quebecers to support political separation if it were to fail in its first effort. The PQ would be hard pressed to maintain the various elements which currently constitute its support. Although most members of the PQ seek political independence, disagreement over the method of attaining separation would likely follow the defeat of the proposed referendum. The separatist movement, unorganized before the formation of the PQ, might well fall back into such a state.

English Canada would most likely consider Quebec political separation a dead issue if the people of Quebec were
to reject a separatist referendum. Hopefully they would not brush the whole affair aside, but would seek some accommodation with French-speaking Canadians of Quebec. If Quebecers were to reject the separatist option, the PQ would be robbed of its momentum. If the federal government were to follow through with positive action to improve the economic and cultural condition of the French Canadian, it would be very difficult for the PQ to mount another assault on the Canadian federation.

**Economic Viability**

A major concern of Quebecers pondering the wisdom of the independence option is that of the economic viability of an independent Quebec. According to one reporter:

> It's true the PQ can make a strong case for the economic viability of an independent Quebec. The province is huge - some 600,000 square miles, bigger than Alaska. It possesses a large industrial infrastructure, a wealth of natural resources, vast hydropower reserves. Its citizens - 27 percent of Canada's population - produced about 45 billion dollars worth of goods and services last year. That output would rank an independent Quebec 23rd among all the nations of the world.

Yet even with such economic credentials, Quebecers would have to pay a steep price for independence.  

According to a Canadian professor: "The bourgeois inclination among French Canadians is stronger than their nationalism. They would not give up their life-style for a flag."  

\[101\] Daniel Latouche, op. cit., p. 69.

However, another political observer does not agree. He writes:

... we can hazard the hypothesis that nationalism has little intrinsic appeal to classes lower in the social order, workers or peasants; it appears only when it is linked with the solution of deeply felt economic ills, often by the presentations of the nationalist goal as a messianic solution to all the social and economic ills. This identification succeeds with the masses in certain conditions, which are hard to determine exactly, and then nationalism becomes a mass force. This has not yet happened in Quebec, although there are signs that it might. If it does, then Quebec will accede to independence in a short space of time.

The primary concern here is with the political aspect of Quebec separatism and the Parti Québécois and not economics. However, many political observers of Quebec contend that economic concerns form a major force behind the current separatist movement.

It is imperative that the PQ convince Quebecers that independence would not entail harsh economic burdens. It must convince the citizens of Quebec that an independent Quebec will prosper both culturally and economically. Although Lévesque has stated that the Quebec separatist movement is a result of cultural considerations, economics will play a major factor. Statements emanating from those opposing separation have been dominated by predictions of doom should Quebec separate. This presents a major hurdle for the PQ to surmount if it is going to convince Quebecers to support separation.

---

Analysis of 1976 Victory

According to one political analyst: "A most interesting fact, demonstrated once again by the [1976] Quebec election, is that the level of voter dissatisfaction towards the government has increasingly become the safest indication of the outcome of electoral contests." He believes that the defeat of the Union Nationale government in 1970, the spectacular re-election of the Liberals in 1973, and the defeat of the Bourassa government can thus be explained. The expression of this discontent has taken two different directions. Many anglophones have switched from the Liberal Party to the Union Nationale, while francophones have increased their support for the PQ. In light of this analysis, the most important question for the future of the Parti Québécois is whether it will be able to meet the many expectations which were raised during the 1976 election, including honest government, economic growth, and social reform.

The results of a referendum for independence may depend largely upon the performance of the Lévesque government. Since the Parti Québécois came to power, unemployment has risen and investment has slowed. There are reports of businesses and English-speaking people leaving the province. Canada's largest life insurance company, Sun Life Assurance, long one of the

symbols of Montreal's stature as a business and financial center, announced January 7, 1978, that it planned to move its head office to Toronto because of Quebec's language law. Such a move could affect more than 1,800 employees and cause an estimated $40 million loss to the local economy. The federal government appealed to Sun Life executives to reconsider the decision. The Sun Life board of directors announced that it would delay a vote on its planned move to Toronto, but in May of 1978, policyholders voted 84 percent in favor of the move, which will soon take place. Some fear that the move will, "... fan the fire of separatism among French Canadians who already believe, with some justice, that there is little room for them in English companies. It would weaken the resistance of the federalist groups in Quebec who are working to keep the country united."\(^{105}\)

Lévesque and his supporters contend that many of the allegations concerning Quebec's faltering economy are groundless, that they constitute efforts by anti-separatists to discredit the government, and in no way result from Parti Québécois policies. The unemployment rate, a $1 billion public debt, and huge government expenditures, they point out, were all inherited from Lévesque's predecessor, Liberal Party Premier Robert Bourassa.

In order to convince the people of Quebec of its ability

to bring about those goals which it seeks, the PQ must lessen Quebec's current economic plight. Although the PQ claims it has inherited such major problems as high unemployment and a large public debt, it nonetheless must make progress in these areas. Today's problems, no matter what their source, are now the responsibility of the PQ. The PQ has stated that Quebecers are hampered in finding solutions to their problems because of federal interference. Quebecers, however, are not likely to be persuaded to vote for separation if the PQ cannot provide some evidence of its capability to resolve Quebec's problems. The PQ's election was not a mandate for separation, but rather a mandate to improve the welfare of Quebec citizens. If it is to succeed in bringing about Quebec independence, the PQ must demonstrate that it can act effectively as well as convincing Quebecers of the merits of separation.

Recent polls have shown that only a minority of Quebecers support the Parti Québécois's call for political separation, somewhere in the neighborhood of 30 percent, although polls vary. Thus it is doubtful that if a referendum were held today, it would receive majority support from Quebecers. This is not meant to imply that political separation will not occur in Quebec, but rather that the Parti Québécois must work to convince a large part of its citizens of the advantages of independence. The Parti Québécois must provide more than rhetoric; it must demonstrate through action its ability in solving Quebec's problems.
English Canada has a great influence in shaping the outcome of the separatist challenge. Actions such as that taken by Sun Life Assurance may very well strengthen Quebec support for the Parti Québécois. If English Canada demonstrates a lack of faith in the future of the Canadian federation, it will undoubtedly help the separatist cause. If, on the other hand, it actively seeks to maintain the present federation, it will be much harder for the PQ to convince its people to separate.

This brings up the issue of just how far should English Canadians go in order to keep the Canadian federation intact. Although most Canadians wish to see their country remain as it is, some fear that the federal government will make extensive concessions which alter the nature of the Canadian federation. They fear that if the Canadian system were altered by decentralizing the powers of the federal government in order to satisfy French Canadian separatists, and were Quebec to opt for independence, the future of the remainder of Canada would be placed in jeopardy.

Recently there has been developing a feeling among some English Canadians that the federal government should stop trying to satisfy French Canadian separatists, who only want independence, and concentrate on the interests of English Canada. Instead of altering the federation, they would rather see Quebec go free. Any change in the Canadian federation should be evaluated from the standpoint of how it would affect
English Canada. In essence, their argument is that a free Quebec would be more desirable than a major alteration of the federal governmental powers.

The confrontation of nationalistic forces on both sides would leave little hope for the salvation of the Canadian federation. Prime Minister Trudeau has sought to placate the demands of the French Canadians through a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework, thus dismissing the notion that there are "two nations" within Canada. He believes that nationalistic forces are reactionary. In order to maintain the federation, Prime Minister Trudeau must check the polarization of nationalistic tendencies of both French and English Canadians.

The next few years will be a time of adjustment for Canada and it is necessary that both sides approach the solution to their problems in a realistic and practical frame of mind. The separation of Quebec is a possibility of which English Canadians should be aware. French Canadians should also be aware that continued association in the Canadian federation is an alternative. Hopefully the resolution of this issue will be handled in such a way as to be advantageous to both French and English Canadians.

As for the Parti Québécois, if they should receive a mandate for political independence, other issues still remain to be resolved. The legality of separation would remain, since it is not provided for under the BNA Act. What would be the
response of the rest of the world to such a development? What would be the federal government's response to a declaration of independence by Quebec? What adjustments would English Canada have to make if Quebec were to leave?

Some observers have stated that the PQ might fall apart once independence were achieved. Separatists represent many different perspectives of the political spectrum; they are only united in the desire for separation. If political independence were achieved, the possibility of the formation of splinter parties would be likely.

The formation of the Parti Québécois has resulted from demands by French Canadians to ensure the prosperity of their culture and well being. It also signifies frustration by some with the utility of the Canadian federation in solving their problems. The Parti Québécois is offering the citizens of Quebec an alternative political system to deal with their problems. It remains to be seen if Quebecers will choose this option.

Although any prediction concerning the success of the Parti Québécois's attempt to bring about political independence for Quebec would only be speculative, the outcome of this crisis will surely leave the Canadian federation a changed system. Even if Quebec should remain within the federation it is likely that the federal government will be more decentralized than it is presently. In the future this decentralization of the central government's powers could help result in the dismemberment
of Canada, a country which has long struggled with its quest for a national identity. A weakened federal government would find it difficult to counter the formation of strong allegiances to the respective provinces rather than to the national entity of Canada. Not only could Quebec later decide to separate but so might other provinces which find themselves many times at odds with the central government.

It would be ironic if Canada decentralized the powers of its federal government in an effort to save the federation only later to find that in doing so it had destroyed the viability of the very federation it seeks to preserve. Therefore, not only must French Canadians decide if they are willing to forego the price of political separation, but English-speaking Canadians must also decide how far they are willing to alter their governmental system to convince Quebecers to remain.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Cook, Ramsay; Brown, Craig; and Berger, Carl, eds. Confederation. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967.


Journals


Magazines


**Newspaper Articles**


**Documents**
