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Communiqué

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Broad postsecession Canada-Quebec partnership would be virtually impossible to negotiate or operate, says C.D. Howe Institute study

A broad postsecession partnership between Canada and a sovereign Quebec, as the Parti Québécois has proposed, would be virtually impossible to negotiate or to operate and would be unacceptable to both parties, concludes a *C.D. Howe Institute Commentary* released today.

More practicable, the author says, would be a limited free trade agreement plus an incremental set of flexible, *ad hoc* agreements developed where common need dictated. But such tenuous linkages would not be the partnership that many Quebecers, sovereignists and federalists alike, desire or expect, nor would they suffice to manage the Canadian economic union.

The study, *Limits to Partnership: Canada-Quebec Relations in a Postsecession Era*, was written by Richard Simeon, currently William Lyon Mackenzie King Visiting Professor of Canadian Studies at Harvard University and an Adjunct Scholar of the C.D. Howe Institute. He is on leave as Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto.

Simeon explains that, in addition to the usual relations between any two independent states (subject only to the rules of multilateral organizations to which both belonged), the relationship between a sovereign Quebec and the rest of Canada (ROC) could follow one or a combination of several models:

- A confederal relationship with ongoing institutions empowered to make decisions on economic and other matters. This model, patterned on the European Union, is the one sovereignist advocates of partnership describe.
- A more limited treaty relationship, like the North American Free Trade Agreement, based on a single agreement focusing on economic matters with limited dispute-settlement mechanisms.
- Multiple linkages — an incremental variety of issue-specific arrangements, created *ad hoc* when useful to the parties (which could include provinces, rather than Ottawa). Institutional structures and decision-rules could vary from agreement to agreement. The myriad agreements between Canadian and US jurisdictions reflect such a model. This is the most plausible model, but even it would be very difficult to achieve.

Simeon suggests that *association* and *partnership* have particular resonance among Quebecers, who have long seen themselves as participating in a confederation of two language groups. This explains the paradox that many Quebecers desire both independence and strong links with Canada. They seek sovereignty not as a fundamental break but as one step along a continuum.

To most Canadians in the rest of the country, however, a “yes” vote in another Quebec referendum would be the crossing of a Rubicon, profoundly changing the country. Their first preoccupation would be their own immediate self-interests and the re-organization of what was left of the country. In the face of a “yes,” Simeon says, sovereignists expect the ROC to reply as a monolith. But reactions, including the reactions to a proposed partnership, would vary widely across regions, provinces, and business sectors.

Simeon argues that, even if it is desired in principle, a two-unit confederation, as partnership suggests, would be difficult if not impossible to operate, and that a ten- or even a five-unit federation might be more congenial.

This publication concludes the C.D. Howe Institute’s postreferendum research agenda, which comprised two *Commentary* series. One series was “The Secession Papers,” which, in the light of the results of the 1995 Quebec referendum, aimed to assist Canadians to “think about the unthinkable.” Papers in this series were *Coming to Terms with Plan B: Ten Principles Governing Secession*, by Patrick J. Monahan and Michael J. Bryant with Nancy C. Coté; *Looking into the Abyss: The Need for a Plan C*, by Alan C. Cairns; *Ratifying a Postreferendum Agreement on Quebec Sovereignty*, by Peter Russell and Bruce Ryder; *Walking the Tightrope: Canada’s Financial System between a “Yes” Vote and Quebec Secession*, by David Laidler and William B.P. Robson; and this paper by Richard Simeon.

Complementing this effort was another series, “The Canadian Union Papers,” which focused on ways to enhance Canada’s political, economic, and social union. Papers in this series were: *Securing the Canadian Economic Union: Legal and Constitutional Options for the Federal Government*, by Robert Howse; *Drawing on Our Inner Strength: Canada’s Economic Citizenship in an Era of Evolving Federalism*, by Daniel Schwanen; *Language Matters: Ensuring That the Sugar Not Dissolve in the Coffee*, by John Richards; *Time Out: Assessing Incremental Strategies for Enhancing the Canadian Political Union*, by Roger Gibbins; and *Citizen Engagement in Conflict Resolution: Lessons for Canada in International Experience*, by Janice Gross Stein, David R. Cameron, and Richard Simeon, with Alan Alexandroff.

Both series were published under the supervision of David Cameron, a political scientist at the University of Toronto.

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Communiqué

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Un partenariat étendu entre le Canada et le Québec serait pratiquement impossible à négocier ou à opérer après la sécession, indique une étude de l'Institut C.D. Howe

Un partenariat post-sécession étendu entre le Canada et un Québec souverain, tel que le propose le Parti Québécois, serait pratiquement impossible à négocier ou à administrer, et serait inacceptable pour une partie comme pour l'autre. Telle est la conclusion d'un *Commentaire de l'Institut C.D. Howe* publié aujourd'hui.

Selon l'auteur, il serait plus pratique d'instituer une entente de libre échange limitée assortie d'un ensemble progressif d'ententes ponctuelles et souples que l'on élaborerait en fonction des besoins mutuels. Cependant, ces liens ténus ne constitueraient pas le partenariat que de nombreux Québécois, qu'ils soient souverainistes ou fédéralistes, souhaitent ou auquel ils s'attendent, et ils ne suffiraient pas non plus à gérer l'union économique canadienne.

L'étude, intitulée *Limits to Partnership: Canada-Quebec Relations in a Postsecession Era (Des limites au partenariat : les relations Canada-Québec à l'ère postsécessionniste)*, est rédigée par Richard Simeon, actuellement professeur invité de la chaire William Lyon Mackenzie King d'études canadiennes à l'Université Harvard, et attaché de recherche de l'Institut C.D. Howe. Il est en congé de son poste de professeur de sciences politiques à l'Université de Toronto.

M. Simeon explique que, outre les relations habituelles entre deux États indépendants (qui sont assujetties aux règles des organismes multilatéraux auxquels ils adhèrent), la relation entre un Québec souverain et le reste du Canada (RDC) pourrait se baser sur l'un ou même plusieurs des modèles qui suivent :

- une relation confédérale avec des institutions dotées de l'autorité de prendre des décisions économiques et autres. Ce modèle, qui suit celui de l'Union européenne, est celui que proposent les souverainistes qui sont partisans du partenariat.
- une relation de traité plus limitée, comme l'Accord de libre-échange nord-américain, fondée sur une seule entente portant sur les questions économiques et dotée de mécanismes limités de règlements des différends.

- des liens multiples — soit une variété progressive d'entente axées sur des questions précises, créées ponctuellement lorsqu'elles s'avèrent utiles aux parties (lesquelles pourraient comprendre les provinces plutôt qu'Ottawa). Les structures institutionnelles et les règles afférentes aux décisions pourraient varier d'une entente à l'autre. La myriade d'ententes entre les compétences canadienne et américaine témoigne d'un tel modèle. Il s'agit du modèle le plus plausible, mais il serait difficile de parvenir même à celui-ci.

M. Simeon suggère que l'idée d'*association* et de *partenariat* comporte une résonance particulière pour les Québécois, qui se voient depuis longtemps comme participants d'une confédération de deux groupes linguistiques. Ceci explique le paradoxe selon lequel tant de Québécois souhaitent l'indépendance tout en conservant des liens étroits avec le reste du Canada. Ils recherchent la souveraineté non sous la forme d'une rupture fondamentale, mais comme l'une des étapes d'un continuum.

Par contre, pour la plupart des Canadiens du reste du pays, un vote du « Oui » dans le cadre d'un autre référendum du Québec équivaudrait à franchir le Rubicon, et à une modification profonde du pays. Leur préoccupation avant tout porterait sur leurs intérêts personnels immédiats et la réorganisation de ce qui reste du pays. Face à un « Oui », explique M. Simeon, les souverainistes s'attendent à ce que le RDC réponde en bloc. Mais les réactions, dont celles face à un partenariat envisagé, varieraient largement selon les régions, les provinces et les divers secteurs d'entreprise.

M. Simeon soutient que, même si on la désire en principe, une confédération formée de deux unités, comme le suggère le partenariat, serait difficile sinon impossible à administrer, et qu'une fédération formée de dix ou même de cinq unités serait plus compatible.

Ce document conclut le programme de recherche post-référendaire de l'Institut C.D. Howe, qui comprenait deux séries de *Commentaires*. L'une des séries s'intitulait « Les cahiers de la sécession » et, à la lumière des résultats du référendum québécois de 1995, voulait aider les Canadiens à « concevoir l'inconcevable ». Parmi les documents déjà publiés dans cette série, figuraient *Coming to Terms with Plan B: Ten Principles Governing Secession*, par Patrick J. Monahan et Michael J. Bryant, avec la participation de Nancy C. Coté, *Looking into the Abyss: The Need for a Plan C*, par Alan C. Cairns, *Ratifying a Postreferendum Agreement on Quebec Sovereignty* par Peter Russell et Bruce Ryder, *Walking the Tightrope: Canada's Financial System between a "Yes" Vote and Quebec Secession*, par David Laidler et William B.P. Robson, ainsi que la présente étude de Richard Simeon.

Parallèlement à cette série, en figurait une autre intitulée « Les cahiers de l'union canadienne », qui portait sur les moyens d'améliorer l'union politique, sociale et économique du Canada. Parmi les documents déjà publiés, figuraient les suivants : *Securing the Canadian Economic Union: Legal and Constitutional Options for the Federal Government*, par Robert Howse, *Drawing on Our Inner Strength: Canada's Economic Citizenship in an Era of Evolving Federalism*, par Daniel Schwanen, *Language Matters: Ensuring That the Sugar Not Dissolve in the Coffee* par John Richards, *Time Out: Assessing Incremental Strategies for Enhancing the Canadian Political Union* par Roger Gibbins, et *La participation des citoyens au règlement de conflits : les leçons de l'expérience internationale pour le Canada*, par Janice Gross Stein, David R. Cameron et Richard Simeon, avec la collaboration d'Alan Alexandroff.

Les deux séries étaient dirigées par David Cameron, un politologue de l'Université de Toronto.

L'Institut C.D. Howe est un organisme indépendant, non-partisan et à but non lucratif, qui joue un rôle prépondérant au Canada en matière de recherche sur la politique économique. Ses membres, individuels et sociétaires, proviennent du milieu des affaires, syndical, agricole, universitaire et professionnel.

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Limits to Partnership: Canada-Quebec Relations in a Postsecession Era

by

Richard Simeon

Many Quebec sovereignists seek independence combined with partnership with Canada. Where does this claim originate? Would the Canada that remained after a “yes” vote in a Quebec referendum be interested in negotiating that sort of relationship? If not, what sorts of relations would be possible?

The author explores a variety of forms that a relationship might take, the reasons *partnership* resonates so much more in Quebec than in the rest of the country, and the cases for and against it in various regions and sectors. He also examines the political and economic dynamics that would attend secession and the negotiation of a new relationship.

His conclusion is that a broad partnership — one based on a single treaty and involving a set of ongoing institutions empowered to make collective decisions on matters going well beyond economic issues — would be unacceptable in the rest of Canada *and* in Quebec and would, in any case, be virtually impossible to negotiate or to operate.

More practicable would be a limited free trade agreement plus an incremental set of flexible, *ad hoc* agreements developed where common need dictated. But such tenuous linkages would not be the partnership that many Quebecers desire or expect, nor would they suffice to manage the Canadian economic union.

Main Findings of the Commentary

- The possibility of partnership between Canada and a sovereign Quebec deserves open, frank discussion because:
 - Even after a Quebec secession, the two entities would be so intermeshed that they would have to relate to each other.
 - In considering their voting decisions, Quebecers need a realistic assessment of the partnership their leaders say is possible.
 - Non-Quebecers need to explore their interests well before the confusion that would inevitably follow a “yes” vote.
- In theory, the relationship between a sovereign Quebec and the rest of Canada (ROC) could follow one of several models:
 - The usual relations between any two independent states, subject only to the rules of multilateral organizations to which both belonged.
 - A treaty relationship, like the North American Free Trade Agreement, based on a single agreement focusing on economic matters with limited dispute-settlement mechanisms.
 - Multiple linkages — an incremental variety of issue-specific arrangements, created *ad hoc* when useful to the parties (which could include provinces, rather than Ottawa). Institutional structures and decision-rules could vary from agreement to agreement. The myriad agreements between Canadian and US jurisdictions reflect such a model.
 - A confederal relationship with ongoing institutions empowered to make decisions on economic and other matters. This model, patterned on the European Union, is the one sovereignist advocates of partnership describe.
- *Association* and *partnership* have particular resonance among Quebecers, who have long seen themselves as participating in a confederation of two language groups. This explains the paradox that many Quebecers desire both independence and strong links with Canada. They seek sovereignty not as a fundamental break but as one step along a continuum.
- To most of the ROC, however, a “yes” vote would be the crossing of a Rubicon, profoundly changing the country. Their first preoccupation would be their own immediate self-interests and reorganization of what was left of the country.
- In the face of a “yes,” sovereignists expect the ROC to reply as a monolith. In fact, reactions, including the reactions to a proposed partnership, would vary widely across regions, provinces, and business sectors.
- Even if it is desired in principle, operating a two-unit confederation, as partnership suggests, would be difficult if not impossible. A ten- or even a five-unit federation might be more congenial.
- Partnership in the broad sense proposed by the Parti Québécois is not possible. The more limited arrangements that might be feasible would fall short not only of what Quebecers have been promised but also of what is required to manage a relationship of two jurisdictions so interlinked as Quebec and Canada.

The idea of partnership is central to the proposals for independence that sovereignist provincial governments have put before the Quebec people. In 1980, the referendum question asked for a mandate to negotiate “sovereignty-*association*”; in October 1995, it called for sovereignty with a “new political and economic *partnership* between two new countries, Quebec and Canada” (italics added).

The critical fact, however, is that Quebec alone could not establish such a relationship. It takes two or more entities to form an association or partnership. So the focus inevitably shifts to the rest of the country.

Would the Canada that remained after a “yes” vote on sovereignty have any interest in forming a partnership? Would it have the political capacity to do so? What, if any, kind of association would be either possible or desirable from the rest of Canada’s (ROC’s) perspective? What might possible models of partnership look like? How might they operate? Can we imagine circumstances in which the ROC would agree to negotiate a partnership agreement? Would it be possible in the tense environment that inevitably would follow a “yes” vote in a referendum? These are the questions that underpin this *Commentary*.

I argue that partnership is not an idea to be dismissed out of hand. Thus, I begin by considering some reasons to take seriously and then set out a variety of possible models. Next I explore in some detail why the idea resonates so strongly in Quebec. I argue that, although the notion that a country can be at once independent and closely associated with another does have an important element of having one’s cake and eating it too, such observations fail to take account of the real dynamic of the idea among Quebecers.

With the stage thus set, I examine in more detail the range of likely opinion about partnership both in Quebec and in different regions and sectors of the ROC. Then I explore

some of the dynamics that would shape the politics of the Canada-Quebec relationship if sovereignty was accomplished.

My conclusion is that broad, expansive models of partnership would be extremely unlikely to succeed. Instead, assuming that the various actors display some level of stability and rationality, the more likely outcome would be a limited free trade arrangement combined with a number of *ad hoc*, temporary, incremental, and relatively informal linkages that could not be designed in advance but that would develop and evolve simply in accord with mutual needs — in effect, the kind of relationships one might expect between any two contiguous, interdependent states in the modern world.

Why Discuss Partnership?

Most non-Quebec commentators reject the prospect of any kind of partnership if Quebec decides to opt out of Canada. Their logic is indeed persuasive, on both substantive and strategic grounds.

Why, on the occasion of a divorce, would the parties simultaneously agree to a new form of cohabitation? If distinct society status and asymmetry in the division of powers are unacceptable within Confederation as it exists today, how could the ROC possibly be interested in supporting the much more radical option of a close association after separation?

Federalist politicians, for example, are unequivocal in their view that a referendum question that linked sovereignty and partnership or association would be illegitimate. As former justice minister Allan Rock puts it: “The question will be separation or not — nothing in between; not partnership or any such thing. Separation is the clear and honest question that must be asked.”¹ To Canadians who take this view, the position of the Parti Québécois’ (PQ) is fundamentally dishonest

and manipulative, seeking support for a model that it cannot deliver.

Strategy is another consideration. Even if Canadians in the ROC are prepared to contemplate some form of partnership — a Plan D — *after* a Quebec vote for sovereignty, how could they possibly signal their agreement in advance of that vote? Doing so would surely reassure Quebecers that the risks of voting for sovereignty were low, massively increasing the likelihood of a “yes” in the next referendum. Thus, is not any discussion of partnership before the next referendum disloyal, if not mischievous? Should federalists not deny any possibility of partnership now, even if they know they might be forced to entertain the idea at some point in the future?

Persuasive as such substantive and strategic observations are, there are good reasons for greater public discussion of the possibility of partnership. Most important, if the “yes” side succeeded, Quebec and Canada would continue to share the north of the North American continent and to be intermeshed economically and in a myriad other ways. Both sides would have to find some way to manage their mutual affairs. The two (or more) new entities would have a *relationship* (as do all countries or territories that abut each other). The question is what form it would take.

Undertaking this inquiry, however speculative it must be, is also useful to assist both Quebecers and non-Quebecers in this prerferendum period. To make their voting decision, the Québécois need a realistic assessment of what partnership possibilities might be feasible. The non-Québécois need to have thought through the possibilities and to have explored where their interests lie well before the shock and confusion that would inevitably accompany a “yes” vote.

Whatever arrangements developed after a “yes” vote, they would not take place in isolation from other events occurring more or less simultaneously. First would be the formaliza-

tion of secession itself, which, as Monahan and Bryant and Russell and Rider demonstrate,² would be extremely difficult to achieve without a damaging constitutional rupture. Debates about partnership and events in other arenas would interact enormously. The bargaining dynamics would differ in a scenario that envisioned secession and partnership being accomplished at the same time and in one that assumed secession first, followed, perhaps only after some time, by the negotiation of future relationships. And the more acrimonious the secession itself, the more difficult partnership negotiations would be, however desirable that result might be.

Similarly, partnership discussions would interact very strongly with the processes through which the ROC rethought its own identity and redesigned its institutions to reflect the new makeup of the country. Any arrangements between Quebec and Canada would likely have major implications for the design of a new Canadian federation, and any such redesign would constrain the possibilities for partnership (as I discuss later).

Quebecers who wanted to achieve sovereignty and partnership simultaneously would probably be disappointed. The reality is that rest of Canadians would be most reluctant to enter partnership discussions before they had completed their own constitutional process for fear that the partnership tail would wag the Canadian dog. Alan Cairns persuasively argues that the reshaping of Canada without Quebec should await the completion of secession in order to avoid an impossible overload of difficult issues³ (detailed later in the paper). But if the secession agreement were to include major elements of partnership, compartmentalizing the issues would probably be impossible.

How to Proceed

Despite these difficulties, I propose to explore the possibility of partnership in the most positive light. I want to reverse the burden of proof,

placing it for the moment on those who believe partnership is impossible.

Thus, I start with the assumption that partnership is, in principle, possible. The idea deserves not to be rejected out of hand; rather, it needs a sympathetic hearing and then a careful testing of its desirability and feasibility.

The reason for this approach is twofold. I wish to test the possibilities for partnership under the most favorable possible circumstances. (If it is unlikely even under these conditions, it becomes even less likely under less favorable ones.) I also hope to provide a counterweight to the current tendency of Canadians outside Quebec to dismiss the idea out of hand and of sovereigntist Quebecers to assume that partnership is a foregone conclusion.

Accordingly, I begin with a set of admittedly highly optimistic — indeed, perhaps unrealistic — assumptions about the situation after a “yes” vote in a referendum held in the near future.

- Quebec would have voted for sovereignty in a clear, unequivocal manner with a strong majority on an unambiguous question. (A question that included an explicit or implied promise of partnership would not qualify because a Quebec government could not keep that promise unilaterally.)
- Political elites on both sides would respect the legitimacy and finality of the decision. Hence, the intention to pursue sovereignty would be uncontested by any major political actors. (The more contested the referendum process and its result, the less likely that any kind of successful, stable relationship could be quickly negotiated.)
- Non-Quebecers would not be in a mood to punish or exact retribution from Quebec. Any negotiations will be conducted in good faith.
- Good faith, however, does not necessarily mean goodwill or a sense of mutuality. For Canadians in the ROC, whatever sense of

common interest, mutual regard, and the like they had associated with the relationship inside Confederation, would have vanished. Hence, the most optimistic view is that they would assess partnership options according to their own self-interest, uninfluenced either by recrimination or by lingering feelings of solidarity. Quebecers would do likewise.

- The negotiations that did take place would be more like international negotiations than negotiations within a country.

This paper is addressed to both sides of the Canadian divide; it is not a brief or set of debating points for either one. Much less am I trying to set up arguments whose purpose is to influence a referendum outcome. Clearly, any conclusions here have implications for that process, but as much as humanly possible, I seek to explore partnership possibilities on their merits, accepting Daniel Turp’s invitation to look at the partnership proposal with “an open mind and a critical eye.”⁴

For readers who are not sovereigntists, I hope to provide a sympathetic reading of the Quebec case for partnership. I do not believe it is a cynical ploy to trick Quebecers into voting for independence by convincing them that nothing will have changed once they have done so; rather, it responds to deeply felt beliefs within Quebec — a point it is important for critics to recognize. And for sovereigntists, I hope to give an equally sympathetic account of likely views in the ROC and the limits these would impose on the scope of partnership.

Whether either side will believe that I have succeeded in my aspiration to be even-handed remains to be seen.

Models of Partnership

What kind of a formal relationship might exist between a sovereign Quebec and the ROC? The words *association* and *partnership* imply

some kind of permanent, ongoing, institutionalized relationship involving mechanisms of co-decision and harmonization on a fairly wide range of matters, one that is broader and deeper than that established by a simple treaty between countries on the model of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Indeed, the implication is the creation of a new political entity with its own structures, powers, and resources. Such a model, however, is only one of the ways in which a sovereign Quebec might interact with the ROC. The relationship could follow a number of different models, each suggesting a higher level of integration:

- *Splendid isolation*, governed only by the broad rules used to manage the international relations between any two independent states, and subject to the economic rules of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and other multilateral institutional arrangements.
 - A *treaty relationship*, related to essential, largely economic matters, with some limited, independent dispute-settlement mechanisms. The treaty would, subject to periodic amendments, be a once-and-for-all agreement, setting out rules governing the behavior of each of the parties; that is, there would be no provision for ongoing policymaking machinery or for co-decision or harmonization across a range of policy fields. This is the NAFTA model.
 - A “*multiple-linkages*” model. The relationship would rest not on a single treaty or agreement covering all elements in it but on a large number of limited, incremental, issue-specific arrangements between the parties, subject to creation and elimination based on their continuing utility to both sides. Structures, powers, decision-rules, and participants would vary, depending on the matters covered in each agreement.
- *Full partnership*. A confederal relationship, in which the two new sovereign parties would create an ongoing and overarching set of institutions that were empowered to make collective decisions on a specified set of matters, which could go well beyond economic issues to include immigration and citizenship, mobility, environmental matters, and the like. This partnership model is the one sovereignist advocates frequently invoke. It is patterned broadly (but with some critical differences) after the European Union (EU).

Each of these possibilities, of course, has many variants. They could also be combined; for example, the multiple-linkages model could be blended with a free trade agreement.

I focus primarily on the confederal, partnership model, though I pay some attention to the other three since (to anticipate my conclusions) I think negotiating a formal partnership in a confederal form would prove impossible and that the most feasible arrangement would likely take the form of multiple linkages plus some kind of free trade agreement.

Before we go further, a note on how words are used. Some non-Quebecers try to cut through the ambiguities by asserting the need to speak of *separatists*, not *sovereignists*, of *independence* or *separation*, not *sovereignty*. I believe, however, that the softer terms do, in fact, capture Quebec opinion better than the harder ones.

Some History

What do the sovereignists themselves mean when they talk of *association* or *partnership*? The idea has a long history in the discourse of Quebec nationalists (see Box 1). It has gone through several permutations, and the PQ itself has not always been united as to whether partnership must accompany sovereignty or, if it is necessary, what form it should take. But it is impor-

tant to note that association or partnership has been an integral element of the aspiration to sovereignty from the very beginning.

Indeed, it is interesting to note the striking similarities between René Lévesque's views (again, see Box 1) and those of a present-day sovereignist, Daniel Turp:

Sovereignists do not want to destroy and break up Canada....Their intention is to invent a new country with its own distinctiveness and ambitions to live their national aspirations. Yet, Quebecers are also committed to building new bridges with a neighbor, a country with which it would like to enter into a friendly, peaceful and novel form of Union, which could be labeled, for the sake of history and continuity, as a new Canadian Union.⁵

This sort of statement may reveal a breathtaking naiveté about how all this would be perceived and interpreted outside Quebec. But there is also a positive element, which needs to be understood by those who criticize association on the grounds that it is merely cynical opportunism.

The call for sovereignty with partnership can be seen as the reflection of a profound ambivalence about Canada and Quebec. Perhaps no one better illustrates this than the current premier of Quebec, Lucien Bouchard, who has over his career been a Pierre Trudeau federalist, an advocate of the Meech Lake Accord, the architect of Brian Mulroney's cooperative federalism, and a sovereignist. Sovereignty with partnership was one means of resolving the contradictions. As Lawrence Martin points out, many Quebecers do not see these changes as political opportunism. "Bouchard," they say, "was simply following the tortuous route of the Quebec conscience on the unity issue."⁶

One can see more of this ambivalence in the twists and turns of Quebec policy during the two or three years leading up to the October 1995 referendum. The PQ's plan for

sovereignty published in 1993⁷ included a discussion of "economic association with Canada," although the relevant institutions were given little emphasis and the word *partnership* did not appear. But as the referendum year of 1995 developed, the polls made it increasingly clear that outright independence, with no guarantee of a future association, had little chance of victory.

Bouchard, then leader of the Bloc Québécois (BQ) in Ottawa, first voiced concerns about this problem in April 1995. Regional commissions dispatched across the province to sound public opinion found much support for sovereignty but grave doubts about opting for it without the assurance of an association. Then a group of "soft" sovereignists who had broken away from the Liberals to form a new party, Action démocratique du Québec (ADQ), led by Mario Dumont, made it clear that it would not support independence unless it was accompanied by some form of association.

Thus the stage was set for the great *virage*, an agreement among the PQ, BQ, and ADQ to propose a "new Economic and Political Partnership" between a sovereign Quebec and the rest of Canada, signed on June 12, 1995.

The main elements of this proposed arrangement were spelled out in the agreement, and in Bill 1, which became *An Act Respecting the Future of Quebec*.⁸ Quebec would indeed be sovereign, claiming the plenitude of state powers to make all laws, impose all taxes, sign all treaties, and write its own constitution. But, along with this goal, it wished "in particular to invent with the people of Canada, our historic partners, new relations permitting us to maintain our economic links and to redefine our political relationships." Hence, the accession to sovereignty would be preceded by an "offer of partnership."

Unlike earlier periods, when Quebec had called for offers from the ROC, this time it would be Quebec that would put the proposal on the table (see Box 2). And sovereignty itself

Box 1: *From Lévesque and the MSA to Parizeau and indépendance*

In 1967, René Lévesque and a band of followers left the Quebec Liberal Party to form the Mouvement souveraineté-association, soon to evolve into the PQ. “There are moments,” declared Lévesque, when “courage and calm daring become the only form of prudence....Quebec must become sovereign as soon as possible.”^a

Significantly, the idea of association or partnership was central to the sovereigntist program from its inception — indeed, it was built into the title of the new movement — though Lévesque was constantly in conflict with more radical elements seeking outright independence, a tension that has existed within the PQ ever since. Lévesque envisioned collaboration on the monetary system, tariffs, the postal system, treatment of minorities, defense, and foreign policy, constituting, in his words, “The Canadian Union.”^b

Lévesque’s emphasis on association appears also to have been partly based on a genuine and strong attachment to Canada. “We do not want to end but rather to radically transform our union with the rest of Canada, so that in the future, our relations will be built on full and complete equality.”^c Canada and Quebec, he argued, must maintain a continuity “which will be largely economic, but also political.” Sovereignty and association would be equal components of a single project. “Association with Canada must be parallel with the independence of Quebec. It would be a crime to cripple with one blow two centuries of communal coexistence.” As for the possible break-up of the rest of Canada, “To me the idea is catastrophic; I do not want to consider it.”^d

The PQ, somewhat to its own surprise, came to provincial power in November 1976. The strategy it adopted toward sovereignty, crafted by Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Claude Morin, focused on a step-by-step process — *étapisme* — designed to allay popular fears of radical change by emphasizing a graduated approach. There would be a referendum, asking only for a mandate to negotiate sovereignty-association, followed by negotiations with the rest of Canada. Whatever the outcome, no final move toward independence would be taken without a second consultation with the people.^e

The emphasis on association was fundamental to this strategy. Details of the proposed partnership were set out in two documents published in 1979. In June, the PQ ratified *Égal à égal*, and a few months later, the government issued a white paper, *Quebec-Canada: A New Deal*, subtitled *The Quebec Government’s Proposal for a New Partnership between Equals: Sovereignty-Association*.

According to the white paper, the association would consist of a customs union with common external tariffs, free movement of capital and people, retention of the Canadian dollar, coordination of “policies inspired by common trends,” and possible collaboration on transportation, including co-management of Air Canada and Canadian National Railways. The aim was to maintain the Canadian economic union with as little change and disruption as possible. The Canadian political union, however, would be radically changed. The association would be managed by a new set of institutions, created equally by the governments of Canada and Quebec: a

would not depend on acceptance of the offer or on successful negotiation. The agreement stated that, after a “yes” victory, “The National Assembly will, on the one hand, be able to proclaim the sovereignty of Quebec,⁹ and on the other hand, the government will have the duty of proposing to Canada a new treaty.”

If the negotiations were successful, the National Assembly would declare Quebec’s sovereignty after the agreement is reached. But, “in the event that negotiations prove to be fruitless, the National Assembly will be able to declare Quebec’s sovereignty upon short notice.” Canada was to have a year to respond to

ministerial community council; a court of justice for the association; a commission of experts, to act as adviser and general secretariat; and a common monetary authority. (There was no proposal for a common parliamentary assembly.)

These institutions would have no independent authority, revenue-raising capacity, or electoral base. All their members would be appointed delegates of the two governments. The general principle governing decisionmaking would be parity. Decisions of the council would require unanimity, while the court would have equal numbers of judges appointed by each government and a president approved by both.

The principle of parity would not, however, be absolute:

In an association between two partners, some fundamental subjects must naturally be subjected to parity; otherwise one of the parties would be at the mercy of the other. That does not mean, however, that in every day practice, everything will be subject to a double veto.^f

Thus, representation on the monetary authority would be proportional to the relative sizes of the two economies. And in “special cases,” the voting rule would reflect the “predominant interest of one of the parties” (examples given are Canada with respect to wheat, Quebec with respect to asbestos). Thus, Quebec would acquire control over all its laws, taxes, territory, citizenship, courts, and external relations, but the extent to which these powers would equip the new country to pursue genuinely autonomous policies would be highly constrained by the commitment to full-scale continued economic integration and by political association. The dilemma for the sov-

ereignists was — and remains — that, in order to win support for sovereignty, it must be accompanied by convincing assurances that continuity with Canada would be maintained.

This dilemma has continued to divide the PQ. Jacques Parizeau, who became party leader in 1987, was highly critical of the gradualist strategy and the proposal for association. Both, he argued, would make Quebec hostage to the goodwill of other Canadians. Hence, under his leadership, the party reoriented its strategy. Independence, not association, was the overall goal, to be achieved with or without the cooperation of the ROC. To the extent that a relationship would be worked out, it would be driven by the ROC’s need to accommodate, however reluctantly, the reality of an independent Quebec, at least as much as by Quebec’s needs.

The Parizeau strategy left Quebec much less hostage to the ROC’s intentions, but at the cost of reducing public support for the project and of precipitating potentially far greater economic and social disruption in the subsequent transition processes.

^a Quoted in Peter Desbarats, *René: A Canadian in Search of a Country* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), p. 131.

^b Ibid.

^c Quoted in Graham Fraser, *PQ: René Lévesque and the Parti Québécois in Power* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1984), p. 171.

^d René Lévesque, *My Quebec* (Toronto: Methuen, 1979), pp. 58, 73, 84. The fullest exposition of Lévesque’s views are found in his *An Option for Quebec* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968).

^e For a good analysis, see Kenneth McRoberts and Dale Postgate, *Quebec: Social Change and Political Crisis*, rev. ed. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980), p. 217.

^f Quebec, Executive Council, *Quebec-Canada: A New Deal: The Quebec Government’s Proposal for a New Partnership between*

the partnership offer and, as then-Premier Jacques Parizeau told a British audience, “if Canada refuses, Quebec will become sovereign nonetheless.”¹⁰

Thus, sovereignty would not depend on prior agreement on partnership. Nor would

there be a second referendum to seek citizens’ further views before independence was declared. As Bouchard said, by virtue of being sovereign, Quebec would be able to discuss “people to people, equal to equal with its neighbor of English Canada.”¹¹

The Importance of Partnership to Sovereignists

Before assessing the plausibility and feasibility of the partnership proposal and reactions to it in the ROC, let us step back to ask how *association* and *partnership* resonate within Quebec.

Outside Quebec, the strong tendency is to dismiss the idea as a ploy designed to win support for a dubious proposition by making promises that are reassuring but that could not be redeemed without the cooperation of the ROC. Association and partnership, say many, are simply political responses to the blunt fact that outright sovereignty could never win in a Quebec referendum. The proposal of partnership is a scam, they suggest. Once separatist leaders have received their majority — once the lobsters are in the pot — the partnership idea will have served its purpose and be quickly abandoned.

Such assertions doubtless have a considerable measure of truth, but they fail to ask *why* the option of sovereignty-partnership or sovereignty-association has such a strong appeal among Quebecers. What looks like — and may indeed be — a political absurdity may refer to an important *psychological* reality, one to which observers outside Quebec should pay more attention.

The terms *sovereignty-association* and *sovereignty-partnership* encapsulate and combine two elements that appear to be deeply embedded in the political identities of a great many francophone Quebecers. The sovereignty side of the equation captures the deep sense that Quebec constitutes a distinct political community: that it is in this sense a *nation* or *people*, that this community is most fully represented and given political expression by the National Assembly and government of Quebec, and that it constitutes a minority within the larger federation of Canada.

If this were the whole story, however, then immediate, complete independence would be

the option most likely to succeed in a referendum. But surveys repeatedly report that outright independence has always been a minority position, even among francophones, and that the numbers favoring it have been remarkably stable over many years.¹²

Association, then, captures the other side of the equation: that along with the primary Québécois identity, many Quebecers, even sovereignists, continue to maintain a strong identity with Canada. In a February 1996 Léger and Léger poll, 85.5 percent of Quebec respondents agreed “somewhat or completely” with the statement that “Canada is a good country where it is good to live.” And 78.1 percent agreed that “we should be proud of what francophones and anglophones have accomplished together in Canada.”

Another survey of francophones in Quebec just before the 1995 referendum found that 29 percent identified themselves as “Quebecers only,” 29.1 percent as “Quebecers first, but also Canadian,” 28.1 percent as Quebecers and Canadians equally, and 6.7 percent as Canadians only.¹³

This double set of attachments — which, I believe, goes well beyond a merely economic calculation of the benefits of association with Canada or the costs of breakup — explains the durability of Yvon Deschamps’ observation that what Quebecers really want is an independent Quebec within a strong, united Canada. As Louis Balthazar puts it, “We want to be with you, but we don’t want to be part of you.”¹⁴

A host of surveys show that Deschamps was exactly right. His statement explains such apparent anomalies as the fact that large majorities of Quebecers, including many sovereignists, continue to agree with such statements as “Canada is the best country in the world in which to live.” It may also explain the paradox that significant numbers of Quebecers believe that after sovereignty they would continue to carry Canadian passports

Box 2: Quebec's 1995 Proposal for Partnership

The arrangement Quebec proposed in 1995 was, as R.L. Watts describes it, a two-unit confederation.^a

The partnership treaty, as set out in Bill 1, would maintain “*and improve*” (my italics) the existing Canadian economic space and establish rules for sharing the current federal debt and assets. The priority was the operation of a monetary and customs union, monetary policy, free circulation of goods, services, people, and capital, labor mobility, and citizenship.^b

The partnership could be extended into other fields, which could include interprovincial and international trade, transportation, international representation, the possibility of the partnership's speaking “with one voice” in international organizations, transportation, defense, the regulation of financial institutions, fiscal and budgetary policies, the environment, the fight against arms and drug smuggling, postal services, and “all other matters that the parties could consider of common interest.”

Thus, the goals of the partnership would be primarily economic, “to ensure continuity in the trade relations between Quebec and Canada,”^c but they could expand well beyond. The political elements were much less clear, reflection the reluctance of many *péquistes* to consider rebuilding a political union that Quebec would just have decided to leave. As Daniel Turp, one of the architects of the *virage*, put it, “The political partnership proposal deserves to be initially modest in its outlook.” Nevertheless, it could lead “progressively into more advanced forms of political union.”^d

The institutions described were much like those the PQ had proposed in 1979. A permanent secretariat would coordinate the partnership. Decisionmaking would rest with a “partnership council” of ministers, with equal representation from Quebec and Canada, whose decisions would be based on unanimity.

The major change was the addition of a parliamentary assembly. Quebec would have 25 percent of the members, who would not be directly elected but appointed from the House of Commons and the National Assembly. The group would have no formal legislative powers, but it could review draft decisions of the council of ministers, make recommendations, and pass resolutions to discuss enlargement of common fields of action. (Thus, its powers would be fewer than those of the existing European Parliament.)

Finally, a tribunal would resolve disputes over the treaty's implementation and interpretation. It could be modeled after one or a combination of existing tribunals in the NAFTA, the WTO, and the Canadian Agreement on Internal Trade.

^a R.L. Watts, “The Limitations of Recent Proposals for Confederal Solutions for Canada” (Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, Queen's University, Kingston, Ont., 1994), mimeographed.

^b Each of these issues is complex. For example, for the pitfalls facing the idea of a common currency, see David E.W. Laidler and William B.P. Robson, *Two Nations, One Money? Canada's Monetary System following a Quebec Secession*, The Canada Round 3 (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, 1991). For a powerful critique of common citizenship, see Stanley H. Hart, *Divided Loyalties: Dual Citizenship and Reconstituting the Economic Union*, C.D. Howe Institute Commentary 67 (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, March 1995).

^c Daniel Turp, “From an Economic and Political Partnership between Quebec and Canada to a Canadian Union,” *Constitutional Forum* 7 (Winter/Spring 1996): 93.

and even to send members to the Canadian Parliament. In the 1996 Léger and Léger poll discussed above, a remarkable 58.4 percent of respondents agreed that “No matter what the arrangement between Quebec and Canada, Quebec should be part of Canada.”

Such responses may indicate confusion, ignorance, and even perhaps manipulation by vote-seeking *péquiste* leaders. But they may also reflect the fact that the word sovereignty itself has an emotional or psychological meaning for many Québécois that is quite different

from the formal, juridical sense of the term as used by constitutional lawyers and from the way it is interpreted by most anglophone Canadians. To the Québécois, it appears to be an affirmation of their identity and of their sense of a right to determine their future for themselves, an understanding not at all inconsistent with retaining attachments to Canada.

Indeed, the term *sovereignty-partnership* encapsulates the fundamental belief (shared by sovereignists and federalists alike) that from its inception Canada was seen as a partnership between the two great language groups. This language and this set of assumptions resonates through virtually all Quebec commentary on Canadian federalism.

In this sense, the ideas of sovereignty and partnership are deeply embedded in a Quebec political discourse that sees them as complementary, not contradictory. Quebecers have *always* thought of Canada as a partnership.¹⁵ The term is familiar and comfortable. And it is the growing rejection of this conception of Canada, as reflected in the *Constitution Act of 1982* and the defeat of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords that has tipped the balance for many people from trust in federalism to belief in the need for sovereignty.

“Partnership,” then, can be seen as an affirmation of “openness to the rest of Canada, even if other Canadians would insist on a thorough separation.”¹⁶ The central difficulty in finding a “renewed federalism” (much less agreement on a partnership arrangement) is that the dominant conceptions of the ROC now argue for the equality of individuals and provinces and are deeply and increasingly hostile to dualism, partnership, or special treatment.

Thus, many Quebecers are only partial or reluctant sovereignists. Even if they feel driven to support sovereignty by their perception that the rest of the country is no longer prepared to accept a dualist vision of Canada, they retain the desire to maintain the historic partnership, albeit in a very different form.

The Implications

If my analysis is correct, it has a number of implications for thinking about institutional models of sovereignty and partnership. First, it suggests that the recent polarization of the alternatives — essentially between the status quo and outright independence — is, in terms of the attitudes of most Quebec citizens, artificial and distorted. Both are minority positions. Democrats must always worry when the alternatives that the political system is able to put before citizens are demonstrably both minority positions and when choices that do reflect the preponderance of opinion are simply not on the table.

Second, the broad range of Quebec opinion does indeed appear fall in the middle, around the alternatives of distinct society/special status in a renewed federalism, on one hand, and sovereignty with a strong partnership on the other. The numbers falling on either side of this balance vary according to changing political events (especially the perceived willingness or unwillingness of the ROC to recognize Quebec’s distinctiveness in a reformed federalism.)

That point leads to a third important implication. For many Quebec voters, the two options are not sharply opposed; indeed, they flow into each other as parts of a continuum. In this sense, in the minds of many voters, renewed federalism (embracing recognition of Quebec’s distinctiveness, with some associated powers) and sovereignty-partnership have more in common with each other than does either of the polar extremes: a federalism rigorously based on the equality of the provinces or outright independence. Rather, both options seek a balance between autonomy and sharing, with the emphasis wavering between one side and the other.

Former premier Jacques Parizeau argues that “sovereignty is necessary and partnership desirable”¹⁷ (although the public opinion data

and the necessity of the *virage* of the 1995 referendum suggest he has it just the wrong way around; it really is: sovereignty is desirable and partnership necessary"). Many ROC opponents of distinct society believe secession is preferable to asymmetric federalism. The result is an odd alliance between the "realists" on both sides. Both hard-line separatists and their hard-headed opponents say that a simple majority "yes" vote would mean that Confederation was definitively ended and that independence straight up would be the inevitable outcome. But both groups, I believe, are out of step with the realities of public opinion in Quebec (and perhaps elsewhere), and both are likely to lead down a dangerous path.

The difficulty is that, at the political and juridical levels and in the reactions of most Canadians in the ROC, what to a Québécois voter might seem like a small shift — little more than another step in a long political evolution starting with the *Quebec Act* of 1774 — would, in fact, be the crossing of a great divide from which there would be no turning back.

The dominant assumption in anglophone Canada is that a "yes" vote to sovereignty would change the country's politics forever in profound ways. Canada would exist no more; any sense of mutuality and solidarity within the larger Canadian community would disappear; Quebec would become the definitive "other," to be dealt with as a foreign power in terms of cold self-interest.

As Denis Stairs puts it:

The first reality that would play itself out in the post-secession environment would be the transformation of an important part of Canada's "domestic" politics into a politics of a very different kind — namely, international politics....The most obvious and immediate...implication would be the absolute release of any Canadian government from the obligation to take into account the interests of the citizens of Quebec.¹⁸

Outside the ranks of PQ activists, few francophone Quebecers see it this way.

In brief, the very meaning of a "yes" vote might well be different in the two linguistic communities. Thus, both sides could make a grievous error. Non-Quebecers would interpret a "yes" as meaning that Quebec is gone, without realizing the vote might equally be a call for symbolic change and recognition. And Quebecers would believe that nothing fundamental had changed as a result of their vote, when in fact everything would have changed.

The consequences of such rival interpretations could be tragic, pushing everyone into choices and alternatives that very few actually preferred and creating a political crisis that might well become unmanageable (see Box 3).

The Cases for and against Partnership

Once Quebec had successfully asserted its claim to sovereignty, what interest would either side have in exploring a subsequent partnership arrangement? The case is much clearer and stronger on the Quebec side.

Quebec Looks at Partnership

As already noted, a commitment to partnership would have obvious advantages for the success of the sovereigntist cause in a referendum. A credible case that partnership is possible and could not be denied by the ROC would enormously strengthen sovereigntists' electoral prospects. If partnership seemed possible, the fear of sovereignty's entailing large economic costs would recede dramatically. Moreover, as we have also already seen, a promise of sovereignty-partnership would accord closely with francophone Quebecers' sense of their own identity as Québécois and as Canadians.

Box 3: *Keeping Cool Heads after a “Yes” Vote*

The divergence of views discussed here suggests that, in the event of a “yes” vote, leaders on both sides should be strongly urged not to rush to judgment. Rather, they should seek some means by which the meanings and nuances of the vote could be explored and in which the subsequent negotiations would not — at least not initially — be about the terms of separation, with or without partnership, but an occasion to explore a range of possibilities, some perhaps not yet articulated.

In the current atmosphere of polarization and tension, this hope is probably vain (especially among PQ militants, who would be unlikely to want to question a victory so recently achieved; economic or political events, however, could force their hand). But it is a hope that should be explored.

Another implication is that it is in both sides’ interests to proceed step by step: to build into the process enough stages or decision-points that options and alternatives can be reconsidered, that conclusions can be revisited, that new paths can be explored, and that citizens’ reactions to events can be monitored and expressed. In this sense, a “yes” vote should be seen not as an end but a beginning, one in which a variety of different models for partnership — including even some form of renewed federalism — might be pursued.

In addition, as Marcel Côté observes, “When the costs and disorder associated with the break-up of Canada emerge into the daylight, the Quebec people will turn against those who have fooled them.”^a As the implications of their vote became clear, many Quebecers might wish to reconsider, and it would be tragic if they were not given some opportunity to do so.

Granted, Robert Young argues persuasively that, in the rush of events following a positive referendum vote, there would be no desire, no time, and no opportunity for such second thoughts.^b PQ leaders would be triumphant, federalist leaders in disarray,^c and financial markets exercising their own harsh discipline and calling for a rapid termination of the uncertainty, which could most quickly be achieved by completing the secession. He may be right, but, on the other hand, many of the factors he discusses could argue for an equally rapid reversal of the decision.

Thus, it could be important to ensure that the federalist ship had not sailed over the horizon. It might better stand by to lower the life lines.

^a Marcel Côté and David Johnston, *If Quebec Goes...: The Real Costs of Separation* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1995), p.193.

^b Robert Young, *The Secession of Quebec and the Future of Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995).

^c This point is also argued by Keith Banting, “If Quebec Separates: Restructuring Northern North America,” in R. Kent

The Case for Partnership

What about the case for actual association in the longer term?

Even unequivocal separatists such as Parizeau argue that an independent Quebec would remain in an economic union with Canada. No one wants to jeopardize the more than \$60 billion in trade or the 500,000 jobs involved. But, goes one argument, these benefits could be maintained without the elaborate machinery of economic and political partnership —

for example, through a nation-to-nation treaty modeled on the NAFTA.¹⁹ Hard-liners also argue that nothing could stop an independent Quebec from unilaterally adopting the Canadian currency.²⁰ All it would take to maintain the economic union would be a few simple rules.

This approach ignores two fundamental facts. First, the NAFTA is far from a full economic union. Most obviously, it does not embody free movement of people. Moreover, the NAFTA and other such international arrange-

ments are primarily about negative integration — the removal of barriers to trade. Unlike the European Union, they are not about positive integration or the strengthening of collective capacities to promote integration, growth, and competitiveness in transportation, communication, the environment, infrastructure, and the like. Nor do they embody any element of sharing or redistribution.

Second, the level of integration between Quebec and the ROC (especially Ontario and the Atlantic provinces) is many orders of magnitude greater than that between any region of Canada and the United States or Mexico.²¹ This linkage is reflected not only in trade but also in a host of corporate structures and relationships. At the level of individuals and civil society, Canadians may have seen a progressive disengagement of their two societies, but the degree of integration is still much greater than that between any part of Canada and the United States, a direct result of the common standards, nondiscrimination, mutual recognition, and legal comity that come from living in the same country. It is highly unlikely that the interdependencies resulting from this economic and social integration could be managed by an arrangement such as the NAFTA.

Given the interdependencies and the differences in size between the Canadian and Quebec economies and populations, the lack of a partnership arrangement would force Quebec to become a “policymaker.” It would be hugely influenced by Canadian policy decisions but have no formal voice in making them. It would be lobbying from the outside. If it unilaterally adopted the Canadian dollar, for example, it would have no say in the decisions of the Bank of Canada. Its fiscal policy would be profoundly influenced by Canadian fiscal policy, over which it would have little control. It would have to accommodate its taxation regimes to those in Canada. It would play second fiddle to Canada, Mexico, and the United

States in the future development of the NAFTA. And so on.

Thus, without partnership or membership in the Canadian federation, Quebec might end up weaker, rather than stronger, than it is now. If the degree of integration that now exists between Quebec and Canada requires harmonization across many important policy areas, then without partnership, Quebec would be forced into accommodating its policies to those of the stronger player. Harmonization might well take place, but an independent Quebec would almost surely have to harmonize its policies with those of Canada more than the other way around. The more committed Quebec was to the maintenance of a full economic union, the greater these constraints would be.

Perhaps I am overstating this analysis of interdependence and the assumption that it would require considerable positive integration and harmonization. Federalism already permits, indeed encourages, much policy diversity, even in such fundamental areas as tax and fiscal policy. As William Robson suggests, it could probably survive more diversity.²² Although I believe the pressures for harmonization would be strong, the model I propose later does not presume any particular desirable level of integration. Rather, it suggests that *ad hoc* measures would develop informally, as the parties came to feel them necessary.

In addition, some form of partnership might well be necessary if a sovereign Quebec was to be able to ensure order and stability and in its own society. Since the October 1995 referendum, it has become clear that the chief barrier to a successful drive for independence is not opposition outside Quebec but mobilization of minorities (anglophones, allophones, and aboriginal peoples) within the province against the sovereignty project. If secession is to be achieved without massive social conflict, then Quebec’s minorities must be reconciled to the project.

As recent developments have shown, this task would not be easy. But a partnership that embodied mutually binding agreements on minority rights, aboriginal rights, citizenship, mobility, and even immigration might provide these minorities a measure of security that would ensure their acquiescence to sovereignty, however reluctantly.²³ A single, once-and-for-all, binding agreement might resolve all these issues. But that is not likely. They are all dynamic concerns in which policy needs to evolve and change. Dealing with them would take the question of partnership far beyond a narrowly defined economic union.

Thus, in the long run as well as the short run, a sovereign Quebec would have powerful reasons to seek a partnership. An arrangement in which Canada and Quebec dealt with each other as foreign powers would ignore the enormous interdependencies that currently exist. The NAFTA model might be more attractive to many Quebecers since it seems to preserve a single economic space while minimizing the need for complex institutions and continued shared decisionmaking. But this too would be insufficient if the goal was to maintain the existing Canadian economic union in its current essentials. A full economic union must be managed, and that is an ongoing process. A wide range of policies need to be harmonized, and if the outcome was to be more than Quebec's simply adjusting to the actions of its larger partner, ongoing institutions would be necessary.

Moreover, both non-francophones and federalists who are residents of Quebec would be important bodies of opinion in any partnership discussions. Like other Canadians, their present position is focused on preventing secession. But if it became a reality, they might come to advocate partnership. In an independent Quebec, they would see ongoing protection of their rights and interests as paramount, and they might believe it could best be found in the provisions of a partnership with respect to mobility, citizenship, aboriginal governance, im-

migration, and the rights of linguistic minorities. (Exactly the same argument can be made for francophone minorities outside Quebec, whose language rights would be highly vulnerable if Quebec became independent.)

Thus, Quebec's interests would probably be served best by expansive, confederal or quasi-confederal models of partnership.

The Case against Partnership

The primary Québécois case against partnership is Parizeau's tactical argument: to make secession dependent on partnership would be to make Quebec hostage to what the ROC was prepared to negotiate.

The longer-run argument is to ask why Quebec should exchange the constraints allegedly imposed by federalism for the constraints embodied in a partnership arrangement. (Indeed, the influence of Quebec on common policies might be no greater in such a partnership than it is today within the federation, where Quebec exercises influence both through its own government and through its role within the federal government.) The answer is that the constraints on an independent Quebec *without* partnership would be even greater.

Sovereignists would be wrong, however, to believe that the two-unit confederation embodied in their 1995 partnership proposal would serve their interests well. Having so few units limits the set of decision-rules. Essentially, the possibilities are just two: a mutual veto or unanimity rule, or a rule based on proportionality in terms of numbers and size.

From Quebec's perspective, both rules would be flawed. The unanimity rule would subject the National Assembly to a veto by the Canadian Parliament over all issues that were included in the agreement and, as we have seen, given Quebec's interests, that list is likelier to be long rather than short.

Proportionality, of course, would be even more dangerous, given the population difference. In all areas to which this rule applied, Canada would have the upper hand.

The dilemma for sovereignists is that, given the existing amount of interdependence, the commitment to maintain and strengthen the economic union, and the evident desire of citizens to maintain some form of union with Canada, the motivation would be to look for a broad, rather than narrow, partnership. But the decision-rule problem would immediately shift the incentives to make the agreement as narrow as possible and to operate it more as an enforceable treaty than as an ongoing set of policymaking procedures.

In addition, in a forum of two units, each must cast one vote and hence speak with a single voice — even though internal opinions may be diverse.

A confederation with more members can have much more flexible decision-rules: unanimity on some, a simple majority on others, and various forms of qualified majority (as practiced by the EU) on yet others. A greater number of units also opens up the possibility of shifting alliances and changing coalitions on different issues (as occur among the 15 members of the EU).

Such shifts are, of course, the case with federalism. Ontario and Quebec are natural allies on some questions; Quebec and the Atlantic provinces on others; Quebec and the West on still others. In a two-unit confederal model, none of these alliances would be possible, since Ontario, the Atlantic provinces, and the West would all be subsumed in the single partner “Canada.” Moreover, Quebec’s interests would have no part in shaping the position that this partner took.

Thus, even from the sovereignist perspective, Quebec might be better off in a ten-unit confederation or even in a decentralized federation. Even more desirable from a sovereignist standpoint might be a four- or five-

member economic union, which could become a distinct possibility if the ROC was to break up in the aftermath of secession.

The ROC Looks at Partnership

Partnership would look very different from the perspective of the rest of Canada.

Recall one of my initial premises: that the ROC would examine the options without anger, vindictiveness, or a desire to punish Quebec. It would look at the pros and cons of partnership carefully and relatively objectively. That being said, however, sovereignists should realize that a considerable period of uncertainty would likely have to pass before the ROC was prepared to undertake discussions of its future relationship with Quebec. The reasons are several.

First, the ROC’s greatest task following a “yes” vote would be the need to come to terms with a fundamental, unprecedented challenge to the country’s core values, identity, sense of self, and institutions — the most profound it has ever faced. Although many Canadians have now come to believe, at least intellectually, that reform of the federal system is probably impossible and that sovereignty or breakup is inevitable, I believe they are a small minority.

Moreover, intellectual acceptance of the proposition in the abstract is one thing; dealing with the emotions and conflicts that would be unleashed once a “yes” vote had occurred would be quite another matter. The first preoccupation of most Canadians would be their own needs and their own future. Their long-term relations with a newly independent Quebec would be a distinctly second order of business.

Second, a vacuum of political leadership would be likely. Ottawa would have to bear responsibility for failing in the first duty of a government — to preserve the country. Its ability to command the loyalty and respect of Canadians and especially to motivate them sympa-

thetically to embark on rebuilding relations with Quebec would be gravely undermined.

Even less legitimate than federal officials generally would be a prime minister and cabinet ministers based in Quebec. New leadership would have to come forward and grasp power before anyone could identify a clear set of interlocutors with whom negotiation about partnership could be held. There would be a strong demand for new elections without Quebec, and this call would carry the danger of increased chaos and heightened conflict. Alternatively, Quebec MPs might resign and a new government — perhaps a majority Reform Party government or a multiparty government of national unity — could be formed.

Third, most Canadians would be extremely reluctant to discuss the terms of partnership before it had become clear how the political system of the ROC was to be reordered. That, too, would inevitably be a drawn-out process. Much public discussion would be necessary before options and alternatives crystallized. Federal and a variety of provincial leaders would be contending for influence. Devising legitimate central institutions would be a major challenge. So would providing Westerners and Atlantic Canadians a sense of belonging since one province, Ontario, would be so dominant in population and economic strength.

Moreover, the possibilities for partnership would be greatly affected by the nature of the new regime that emerged. One possibility, not to be dismissed, is the breakup of the rest of the country. If that occurred, partnership would likely turn out to be a set of arrangements between Ontario, Quebec, the Atlantic provinces, and perhaps some portion of the West.

A perhaps more plausible alternative is that a reconstructed Canadian federation would be highly decentralized — indeed, a confederal model itself. The most detailed Plan B enunciated so far is Gordon Gibson's, under which federal powers would be dramatically less than they are today. "Indeed, the briefly fa-

mous 'Allaire report' of the Quebec Liberal party might seem to be extravagant and generous to the central authority."²⁴ Federalism would be seen to have failed. It would have little claim to revival, and burned by this failure, citizens would demand that power be brought close to home. Hence, Ottawa's political and policy significance would decline so that Parliament might as well be replaced by a council of ministers.

If this future were to occur, it would not include a central government that could negotiate and then manage a partnership with Quebec. More likely, Quebec would be invited to participate, as it wished, in the new, multi-member confederation.

Yet another possible scenario envisions a stronger, reinvigorated federal government. Once Quebec was gone, proponents suggest, the single most powerful decentralizing force in Canadian federalism would have been removed. The ROC could then contemplate the federal regime its citizens want, rather than the one that has historically been acceptable to Quebec. And what its citizens want, it is suggested, is a regime in which Canadians generally look to Ottawa as the primary or most important level of government.

This view, of course, is the one PQ leaders have taken. It is consistent with their fundamental image of a two-partner, two-founding-nations Canada. Indeed, ever since the time of Lévesque, the PQ has argued that the federation frustrates both French and English, and that both would be better off by its demise.²⁵

The perception of a ROC that would rally around a powerful Ottawa in the event of secession may have been plausible in the 1950s and 1960s. It is much less so today. Over the past two decades, Canada has experienced powerful provincializing and decentralizing forces. The fight against debts and deficits and the constraints of globalization have diminished the power and effectiveness of the fed-

eral government and hence its ability to compel loyalty and respect. A sense of regional imbalance, of an Ottawa preoccupied with central Canada, has driven regionalist movements in much of the West. Ontario, with its own position in the Canadian and North American political economy changing, has come to advocate a more province-centered position.²⁶ Provinces, self-confident, but stung by large cuts in federal transfer payments, are increasingly unwilling to accept federal leadership or a strong federal role in setting and enforcing national standards.

Indeed, most recent proposals for reform of the federal system envision increased transfers of power to the provinces and a quasi-confederal model in which national norms and standards are established through federal-provincial or interprovincial cooperation.²⁷ Although some analysts dissent from this view²⁸ and although support for further decentralization in the general public is by no means certain (recall that much of the public opposition to the relatively minor decentralizing steps and limits on the federal spending power in the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords was a major source of hostility), the pressures for decentralization appear strong.

If decentralization is the direction for the future, the implications for the possibility of partnership are important. Provinces would be highly unlikely to accord Ottawa much leeway as the “Canadian” interlocutor with a sovereign Quebec at the partnership table. But Quebec sovereignists themselves might think about the possible virtues of a multi-unit, rather than two-member, confederal model — whether they were to participate fully as one of ten members or, in a more limited way, as a sovereign, associated state.

Finally, sovereignists need to realize, as they think through the pros and cons of partnership and its variants, that Canada without Quebec is not a monolith. Interest in partner-

ship is likely to vary greatly across regions, provinces, and sectors.

Regional Interests

The most obvious differences would be regional. Incentives to engage in partnership would depend on each region’s existing level of political integration with Quebec and hence on the costs of disrupting existing arrangements.

As sovereignists are fond of pointing out, Ontario and Quebec are tightly intermeshed in a myriad economic relationships, and their history of sharing the Empire of the St. Lawrence is a long one.

The complexity of these linkages makes it unlikely that they could be managed effectively through simple international relations or even through a NAFTA-like arrangement. If federalism fails, Ontario’s economic interests would likely incline it to support a partnership model. But even this should not be taken for granted. Ontario’s trading patterns have been changing, and its dependence on the Quebec market declining. The province would, therefore, have to weigh the advantages of partnership with Quebec against the implications that arrangement might have for its north-south and western trading relationships.

The Atlantic provinces would have even stronger economic interests in a partnership. Today they depend, only slightly less than Ontario, on the Quebec market for their exports. They would also have very strong incentives to ensure that surface transportation links between them and the ROC be maintained. More-over, they would be very weak members of a reconstituted Canada dominated by Ontario. Since as poorer provinces they have much in common with Quebec, they would likely support any model that kept it closely tied to the Canadian economic union.

In the case of both Ontario and the Atlantic provinces, it is also conceivable that the legacy of historic ties and the desire not to sever them

completely would play some role in building support for a partnership, once the initial shock had passed. Acadians in New Brunswick and francophones in other provinces would be particularly anxious not to sever all ties. Partnership might look like an acceptable second-best solution.

Recent surveys and the 1997 federal election results suggest that Ontarians tend to be more sympathetic than other Canadians to the idea of Canada as a partnership between two great language groups and to the idea of accommodating Quebec through recognizing it as a distinct society. It does not follow, however, that Ontarians would necessarily be sympathetic to partnership with a sovereign Quebec. Indeed, the very strength of current attachments might make the sense of anger and rejection following a “yes” vote even stronger in Ontario than in other provinces, where emotional links to Quebec are weaker.

None of these factors would have much weight in the West. If partnership could be presented as a device essential to the preservation of the macro Canadian economy and to financial stability, in which Westerners do have an interest, it might draw some support. But the fact is that Western labor markets and trading relationships involve relatively few links with Quebec. Linkages through investment may be more important, but they are less vulnerable to disruption (especially if stronger international rules to ensure capital mobility come into force). Thus, there would be few issues on which interdependence was strong enough to justify partnership.

Moreover, a strong thread in Western politics has been that the Canadian political economy has been dominated by central Canada. There has also been much resentment against alleged special treatment for Quebec and the extent to which issues surrounding it dominate national politics. In the West, Ted Morton suggests, “the strongest desire is for closure on the Quebec/national-unity question...there is

little place for Quebec in the West’s New Canada.”²⁹ If this (deeply depressing) view is true, the implication is that Westerners would have little emotional resistance to Quebec’s leaving, so they would look at the partnership proposal in purely cost-benefit terms.

In addition, partnership as envisioned by the PQ would have an enormous potential downside for the West. In any secession scenario, Westerners would be highly suspicious of the economic and political weight Ontario would exercise in a new federation, however reconstituted. Partnership would look even more threatening. Ontario would have the dominant weight within the federation and thus in shaping Canada’s bargaining position. Ottawa would then sit with Quebec at the partnership table. Central Canadian domination would, in Westerners’ eyes, be doubly reinforced. It is hard, therefore, to imagine their being interested in anything more than the most minimal future relationship. Thus, Westerners would strongly oppose broad partnership arrangements. The most they could be expected to support would be a very limited treaty-type model.

Indeed, the political structure of Western Canada after a Quebec secession remains very much in doubt. Many permutations are possible. Some commentators think the inevitable consequence would be the emergence of a sovereign West, or perhaps two or three such entities, opening up yet other models for partnership — one between Western Canada, Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic Canada.

Others argue that the predominant feeling remains “we want in,”³⁰ suggesting a decentralized federation with strong provincial representation at the center in order to counterbalance Ontario’s numerical weight. In either case, the simple, two-unit partnership seems implausible.

Provincial Governments

If we think of provincial governments as distinct from the regions they represent, another set of interests comes into play. What impact might a Quebec-Canada partnership have on the powers and jurisdiction of the provinces? The division of powers in such a partnership could have major implications for the division of powers in the remaining federation.

The addition of a two-unit confederation on top of a nine-unit federation might be expected to undermine the provinces. Canada would need to speak with one voice at the partnership table, and some of the issues the new agreement would cover inevitably would encroach on provincial concerns and responsibilities. Provinces would strongly oppose any such development.

Moreover, the more any partnership came to look and act as a third level of government,³¹ the more likely would be a sense of institutional overload, leading to demands for rationalization of the system, perhaps to the detriment of the provinces.

Overall, provincial governments, concerned with their own status, would likely be highly suspicious of partnership arrangements, especially since one of their number would have had its status elevated so dramatically. They would demand a voice both in negotiating the partnership and in its subsequent operation.

Business

Since so much of the PQ proposal for partnership is based on a desire to maintain the economic union, the attitudes of business toward partnership would be very important. Again, attitudes likely would vary by region and sector. The more dependent particular firms were on markets in both Quebec and the ROC and the more their office and manufacturing facilities were located across the country, the more concerned they would be that secession be

achieved with as little disruption as possible and that future relationships accommodate their needs.

National and transnational firms would support models that maximized the chances of policy harmonization between Canada and Quebec; they would want to ensure that citizenship rules did not disrupt transfers of employees across borders. Similarly, industries and firms currently under federal jurisdiction — from airlines to banks to telecommunications companies — would have a particularly strong interest in consistency of regulatory regimes between the two new countries. Hence some important business interests would likely press for as close a relationship as possible.

Binding Quebec into a partnership with Canada might also alleviate fears that an independent state would, either out of ideology or necessity, pursue radically different policy directions, potentially hostile to business interests.

The attitudes of business people are particularly unclear and likely to shift rapidly with different economic circumstances. In a 1991 survey, taken after the failure of the Meech Lake Accord,³² a slim majority (55.4 percent) of English-Canadian business people agreed that, if Quebec voted “yes” in a referendum, it and the ROC should then negotiate economic ties. Support for free trade was highest (78.7 percent), followed by a common currency (46 percent), and a common central bank and army (both about 36 percent). Nevertheless, sovereignty-association as a preferred option was far behind both the status quo and new constitutional negotiations.

These responses contrast strongly with those of Quebec business people in the same survey. Seventy-two percent of them opted for sovereignty-association as their preferred option, and 95 percent supported economic ties in the event of a “yes” vote. Large majorities favored a common currency, free trade, a common army, and a common central bank.

Coming to Terms with Partnership

After a “yes” referendum victory, the evolution of ROC public opinion with respect to a future partnership arrangement with Quebec would clearly depend greatly on a number of broad considerations about what was possible and desirable.

First, people would need to believe that the decision to accomplish sovereignty was clear, decisive, and legitimate. There would have to be a broad realization that a sovereign Quebec was now an irreversible reality, that all avenues for exploring renewal within federalism had been exhausted, and that no reasonable chance of retreating from the decision existed. In other words, Canadians outside Quebec would need to come to terms fully with the idea of sovereignty itself — perhaps a long process — before they could give any serious consideration to anything but the narrowest and most frosty future relationship.

Second, thinking about relations with Quebec would take a distant second place to thinking about the reconstruction of the ROC. Again, the implication is that consideration of partnership would come later rather than sooner.

Third, the public would need to be convinced that a partnership arrangement would serve Canada’s interest, not just Quebec’s. Any idea that partnership was being done primarily “for Quebec” would be fatal. Indeed, if the example of the Charlottetown referendum is any guide, any agreement would likely be weighed in terms of who got more out of it, and if the scales were seen to be unbalanced, the partnership project would certainly fail, even if it offered the ROC real benefits.

Fourth and closely related, it would be essential to allay fears that a partnership would result in a major shift of power between Ottawa and the provinces or give Quebec more weight in the making of decisions affecting the whole country than it has at present. Any plau-

sible suggestion of these outcomes would doom the prospects for negotiation of a successful partnership. It would be one thing to accede to the desire for radically more autonomy for Quebec but quite another for that autonomy to be perceived as a device through which Quebec would have more, not less, influence over the rest of the country. As Roger Gibbins makes clear, partnership would have to mean not only that Quebec would gain greater autonomy from Canada, but also that Canada would have to gain greater autonomy from Quebec — as in having national political institutions in which Quebec did not play a part.³³

Indeed, sovereignists have often tried to convince other Canadians that Quebec independence would benefit them too, providing them an opportunity to have the kind of federal system they wanted without continually being held hostage to what is acceptable to Quebec. As Lévesque put it 30 years ago, “The present regime also frustrates the English-speaking majority from simplifying, rationalizing and centralizing certain institutions as it would like to do.”³⁴ The stronger the partnership, however, the less freedom the ROC would have. Similar fears could, of course, arise with a once-and-for-all treaty arrangement if its terms imposed strict constraints on the powers of either federal or provincial governments.

Negotiating Partnership

My survey of likely opinion in the ROC suggests that it would be little inclined to enter into partnership negotiations with enthusiasm or alacrity. But suppose our original assumptions hold and there is at least some willingness to explore the options of future association. Several sets of questions then arise. The key issue is the political dynamics that would attend secession and the subsequent economic and political events.

How would events unfold in the aftermath of a successful sovereignty referendum? There are two broad views.

The first, best exemplified by Robert Young,³⁵ is that, even with a small majority “yes” vote, internal and external forces would push inexorably for a quick if messy completion of secession. Financial markets would panic, the dollar would go into free fall, capital flight would begin, social unrest would erupt. Something would have to be done — immediately — to restore calm. Sovereignist leaders would be triumphant, and francophone Quebecers would quickly rally around them. The ROC would be in disarray, and however discredited its federal leadership, the only alternative would be to have it bargain quickly with Quebec. International forces would push for an early settlement, which would likely be accomplished if only to avoid further drastic disruption of the two communities.

An alternative scenario suggests the process would be much more drawn out. Both sides would have to assess the meaning of the vote and the immediate political fallout. Financial panic might as easily provoke a move in Quebec to abort the secession, rather than expedite it. Even without partnership, the list of contentious issues to resolve would be long. Moreover, analysts such as Monahan and Bryant and Russell and Ryder³⁶ argue that a legitimate secession would have to be achieved through constitutional means, again opening up the possibility of a long process before the requisite consent was achieved.

Both models are plausible, and predicting which would be more likely to occur is difficult. There is also the possibility that they could be combined in the sense of the parties’ coming to rapid agreement on a few basic issues immediately, in order to contain panic, and then following a more measured and lengthy process to formalize the secession and the subsequent relationship. The two stages, could not, of course, be neatly separated. Suc-

cessful management of the first steps would facilitate later agreements; failure would poison the well for the future. And once in place, initial arrangements, even if conceived as temporary, would be hard to dislodge later. (See Box 3.)

Moments of Decision

Predicting the atmosphere in which postreferendum discussions would occur is indeed impossible. Sovereignist commentators appear remarkably confident that cool and rational heads would prevail and that mutual trust and goodwill would mark the discussions. They are confident negotiations could be managed successfully. Given recent events, this forecast seems hugely optimistic.

The debate does, however, suggest a number of moments at which possibilities for partnership might be addressed. It also suggests that the entire process is likely to involve a number of steps or stages, rather than be accomplished all at once.

Moment One. In some ways, the ideal time to sketch at least the broad outlines of a partnership would be *before* the next referendum.³⁷ The form could be a package linked to agreement — either explicit or implicitly accepted — on the referendum question, the acceptable majority, and the rules of the game for the referendum campaign.

The ROC would be saying, in effect, here are the tests that it believes any secession vote must pass in order to be considered decisive and legitimate. It would follow that such a set of tests would have to be accompanied by a commitment that, if they are passed, the ROC would be bound to give effect to secession with the least possible delay. To this could be added some broad principles to which the ROC would adhere in subsequent negotiations, including an indication of the principles that would gov-

ern Canada's approach to thinking about partnership.

The great advantage of this approach is that it would minimize uncertainty. Citizens on both sides of the divide would be reasonably sure of what consequences would flow from a "yes" vote. Business and financial interests could be reassured. Quebecers would have a clear sense of just what they were getting — and losing — by virtue of supporting sovereignty. It would become clear that the PQ could not unilaterally allay fears by promising partnership and that the belief that nothing really would change after secession was wrong. Quebec voters would thus be in a better position to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of choosing independence over federalism. (Indeed, such a strategy could, in principle, be combined with a statement about what changes in federalism they might expect were they to vote "no," again enhancing the "quality" of the vote.)

Desirable as such an approach might be, the chance of its happening is minute. Many politicians outside Quebec are quite prepared to state their conditions — Plan B — for a Quebec vote; they are much more reluctant to spell out subsequent steps in advance. If the proposed terms were at all reasonable or generous, they would be accused of selling the country out and predetermining a successful referendum vote.³⁸ If the conditions were tough and unyielding, they would be undermined by PQ arguments that they were just a bluff, not to be taken seriously. (Such arguments have already been remarkably successful in counteracting apocalyptic predictions about the economic and social consequences of a decision to separate.)

In addition, no Canadian government now has a mandate to set out unilaterally the terms of a future partnership. Given the likely need for constitutional amendment to give effect to any new relationship, no single government

could make a fully credible commitment to any particular postreferendum model.³⁹

Nevertheless, virtually all advocates of Plan B say that Canada would not stand in the way of a strongly and clearly expressed decision by Quebecers to secede (even if it is difficult to imagine the constitutional process by which that might be accomplished). Then there is indeed some obligation to indicate how the ROC would proceed after a "yes" vote.

Moment Two. A second moment for addressing a partnership arrangement might occur in the immediate aftermath of a referendum "yes."

Let us assume for a moment that Young is correct in believing that confusion, panic in financial markets, and capital flight, not to mention social unrest, would place powerful pressures on authorities to stabilize matters as quickly as possible. Under these circumstances, an agreement, whether it mentioned or implied partnership, would be cobbled together in great haste, with little opportunity to consider the longer term.

With a primary goal of restoring calm, any interim agreement would focus on the critical immediate issues: the debt and management of Canada's financial obligations, assurances about the continuity of laws, perhaps an interim arrangement with respect to the currency, basic guarantees of minority rights and borders, but little more.⁴⁰

Once calm had been restored, the need for some elements of such an agreement might disappear. Others would appear, on reflection, to be undesirable, unworkable, or inappropriate to one or both sides. Many important issues would have been left aside. There would have been no opportunity to think about how to design an institutional framework.

The legitimacy of those who negotiated such an agreement would be in question. It would probably have been made by the incumbent federal government, which would

have no authority to negotiate longer-term arrangements. And, most important, citizens and governments would have had no opportunity to think through their long-term interests or for new, more legitimate authorities to have taken office.

Thus, although some elements of an interim agreement might turn out to be permanent or to set a benchmark for any subsequent agreements, it is best seen as a stopgap solution. The long-term relationship between the two entities would remain to be settled.

Moment Three. The makeshift nature of any interim agreement would require a follow-up stage of negotiation, which might be coupled with final ratification of the terms of secession. But this stage might not — indeed, probably would not — come quickly. Much would need to be done.

Both parties would have to carefully assess the responses of economic and political actors to the initial vote and its aftermath. Public opinion in both Quebec and the ROC would no doubt be highly fluid and changeable. Would Quebecers be getting cold feet and thinking about ways to get back to federalism? Or would they display strong national solidarity, with even some federalists rallying around the great new project? As the implications became clear in the ROC, would anti-Quebec feelings harden, or would the dominant mood become acquiescence and a willingness to work things out? There can be no safe predictions about such matters.

Each side would also have to carefully think through its interests in light of the new circumstances. Quebec would be more likely than the ROC to act in a unified manner, partly because it has one government, rather than twelve, and partly because its government and civil society have so thoroughly considered the associated issues over a long period. (See, for example, report of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission,⁴¹

though that report paid little attention to association or partnership.)

Yet even in Quebec, as already noted, views on the necessity and scope of a future partnership are by no means united, even among *péquistes*. Moreover, the province has become increasingly polarized on ethnic and linguistic lines. It would be impossible for its government to ignore internal dissent as it prepared to discuss the terms of secession and partnership with the ROC.

Nevertheless, formulating interests and objectives in the ROC would be a great deal harder for at least two reasons. First, the federal government, as presently constituted, would have no mandate to play a strong role, much less to claim to speak for a “Canada” that had just been repudiated and in which Quebec representatives no longer played a part. No serious discussion of long-term relationships could occur before the formation of a new government. Until then, Quebec would have no authoritative interlocutor in the ROC.

Second, given the differing regional and governmental interests discussed earlier, the very notion of a ROC interest would remain unclear. An extended period of discussion and debate, both regional and intergovernmental, would be necessary before Canada could be prepared to come to the table.

Another delay might occur because Canada, even if it could agree within itself, might still be in no rush to start negotiations on a long-term relationship. Once the sovereignty vote had been successful, Quebec would need an agreement much more than most of the rest of the country. Even if an eventual agreement was in the interests of both sides, and even if no one had an interest in the collapse of the Quebec economy, this asymmetry would strengthen Canada’s bargaining power.

Indeed, as time went on, the need for partnership would likely become more and more urgent to Quebecers but simultaneously be seen as less pressing in the ROC. If those shifts

occurred, Quebec's bargaining power would decline further.

Remember that, in these negotiations, the default position would be no agreement. Although that situation would be costly for both sides, it would likely be costlier for Quebec, which, with no agreement, would find itself forced to adapt its own policies to those of Canada with no guarantee of continued access to the Canadian market.

Another important change from the dynamics of past constitutional discussions is that, in the past, Quebec awaited an offer from the rest of the country; this time, Quebec has asserted that it would make an offer of partnership to Canada. In doing so, it would risk rebuff. Thus, it is the ROC that potentially holds a "knife to the throat."

This analysis suggests that Young may be right in thinking that a quick agreement would emerge in the immediate aftermath of a successful referendum. But it would be a stopgap. An enormous number of tasks would need to be completed before the final terms of secession and the subsequent relationship were fully addressed.

Who Would Negotiate Partnership?

Perhaps the most persistent *péquist* misunderstanding of the ROC is its sense that Canada is a single entity centered on the federal government. This view is less and less valid, as devolution and decentralization proceed apace. Who, then, would speak for Canada in a negotiation of future relationships?

Once the initial crisis was over, provincial deference to Ottawa would rapidly decline — unless the federal government proved exceptionally effective in managing the first stages of negotiation. Even if it did, the country would have to hold a federal election, without Quebec, in order to select a new national government with a mandate both to deal with

Quebec and to help Canada redefine itself. If this election produced a government with strong support across the country, the initiative could remain with Ottawa. If not, provincial governments would emerge as the principal champions of each region's interests.

Whatever the result, the provinces would be important players in any final settlement, especially if it required constitutional amendment. They would have little patience with any federal claim that negotiation was now a matter of external affairs and hence of federal jurisdiction. They would also have a constitutional claim of their own: to the extent that any agreement involved matters under provincial jurisdiction, implementation would be a provincial responsibility.

In brief, the fact is that any Canadian position in the negotiations would first have to be negotiated between Ottawa and the provinces. And even given agreement on that position, the provinces would be unlikely to permit federal representatives alone to be at the bargaining table. Neither would the provinces agree to be merely consulted, as they were in the negotiations of the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement and the NAFTA. They would require direct membership on the negotiating team.

Greatly complicating federal-provincial coordination in negotiations with Quebec would be the fact that the reconstituting of the remaining federal partners would be going on simultaneously. The more extensive the partnership envisaged, the greater would be its implications for the new system. Hence, many provinces would be reluctant to commit themselves to a Quebec-Canada partnership before the shape of the new Canada had been decided.

Thus, any Quebec expectations that its representatives would be facing a single negotiating partner are likely to be wrong.

The Outcome

After a “yes” referendum and subsequent negotiations, what might the new Canada-Quebec relationship look like?

At the outset, I suggested four forms that a future Canada-Quebec relationship could take: splendid isolation; a NAFTA-type treaty arrangement; a set of multiple, *ad hoc* linkages; and the full partnership proposed by the PQ. What does my analysis say about these alternatives?

Many in the ROC may desire isolation, but it would not be possible in its stark form. Canada and Quebec are linked in so many ways and at so many different levels that a surgical separation would be impossible. It would simply be too disruptive and costly to interests on all sides. So, although once separation occurred, the style of the relationship would include all the self-interest and wariness that normally characterizes international relations, the intensity of the relationship would necessarily be greater than usual.

Slightly more plausible would be a free trade agreement tied to the NAFTA. Negotiating even this would not be easy, since many of the issues that bedeviled the original NAFTA negotiations would once again be on the table. But assuming such an arrangement were completed, it would still be insufficient to maintain the Canadian economic union. A free trade agreement would be a necessary, but insufficient, part of future arrangements.

What about the alternatives: a comprehensive partnership or a much more flexible, unstructured set of linkages?

A Comprehensive Agreement

Most discussions of a Canada-Quebec partnership arrangement suggest (or imply) that it would be encompassed in a single document or treaty setting out in detail the areas of shared decisionmaking, along with the structure, membership, powers, and decision-rules of the

institutional framework. There would be one comprehensive agreement (presumably subject to amendment by an agreed formula).

This *Commentary* has demonstrated, however, that such an arrangement would be virtually impossible to achieve. The more comprehensive and definitive the agreement, the more difficulty Canada would have in arriving at its position, the more complex the bilateral discussions, and the less the probability of winning successful ratification in the ROC.

Given that Quebec would have recently said no to Canada, a global Canada-Quebec union likely would be unacceptable to most non-Quebecers. Debate about such a new union would have all the symbolic features that have made constitutional change within the federation so difficult.⁴²

A new partnership would be constitutional in two senses. It would have implications for the existing Canadian Constitution and division of powers, and the agreement itself would have most of the characteristics of a constitution. Indeed, it could well be necessary to incorporate its terms into the constitutions of both new entities. If the agreement took this form, Canada would have to follow its existing rules of constitutional amendment (suitably modified to account for the absence of Quebec), with all the possibilities for rejection that the country has already experienced.

Multiple, Ad Hoc Agreements

All this suggests how difficult arriving at a comprehensive partnership would be. An alternative approach might be more successful. An incremental, *ad hoc*, and tentative route would use not one but many agreements, each covering different issues with different participants and different decision-rules.

This approach would still require a basic document of agreement on the terms of secession and on key issues, such as the debt, employees, assets, and the like. Such a document

could also include the parties' general commitment to cooperate in any areas that were mutually beneficial and perhaps a limited agreement on free trade (or on Canada's backing Quebec's accession to the NAFTA). But that would be all.

What would follow would be a series of separate agreements. Some of them — such as those covering citizenship, minority rights, territory, and aboriginal peoples⁴³ — would need to come quickly. Others could be developed over time, as the need arose, in such areas as coordination of fiscal policies, harmonization of taxes and regulations, and environmental policy. The mechanisms for coordination could vary from area to area. Some might need formal joint decisionmakers or authoritative tribunals, but each would be separate, with a limited and specific mandate. In many other areas, there would be no need for formal decision-rules and voting procedures at all: consultation and information exchange would be sufficient, with each government responsible for its own policy formation and implementation.

Eventually, a large number of such *ad hoc* agreements might develop, weaving at the policy level a myriad linkages paralleling the economic interdependency and shared values and interests that now exist. Alternatively, the agreements could be restricted to a small number of critical areas.

This approach would have a number of major advantages over a single, global partnership. First, it would carry far less of the symbolic constitutional baggage; agreement and cooperation would clearly arise only out of mutual need. Most, if not all, the agreements could be achieved without constitutional change, and some could be accomplished administratively, without going to the legislatures.

Second, the fact that many agreements would require only consultation means that the decision-rule problem would be largely avoided. As noted at the outset, this problem is

virtually insurmountable in a two-unit confederation. Each partner's having an equal vote is unacceptable to the larger one; anything less places the smaller in a permanent minority position. Varying the decision-rule to allow equality on some issues and proportionality on others is only a partial solution. Who decides which rules apply when? Multiple agreements would allow the rules to be tailored to the case at hand, not to abstract but irreconcilable principles.

A related advantage would be that a multiplicity of agreements also makes it possible to vary the number and character of the players from issue to issue. Where coordination was desirable on matters of provincial jurisdiction, there would be no reason the provinces would not become the "Canadian" players at the table. Although this prospect offends the PQ's two-nations, equal-partners model, it opens for Quebec the possibility of coalition building, which is possible only with more than two players. It would also allay some of the provinces' fears that partnership would erode their powers. In many cases, the agreements would be bilateral or multilateral, involving Quebec and one or a few provinces, such as Ontario and New Brunswick.

Moreover, in some areas, such as management of the St. Lawrence Seaway, the participants might not be governments at all; there is no reason they could not be actors from the private sector exercising delegated powers.

Finally, a series of *ad hoc*, informal arrangements would alleviate two other problems potentially associated with the partnership model. One is the "democratic deficit." The PQ's partnership proposals include a council of ministers that would be the authoritative decisionmaker; its decrees in areas under the jurisdiction of the partnership would be binding on all other governments.

The resulting democratic deficit would pose a host of problems. The council's accountability to electorates and legislatures would be in-

direct at best. Any authority it exercised would be taken away from federal and provincial governments and, by extension, their citizens. This loss of accountability would be much more severe for Canada than for Quebec (because of the much greater diversity of interests the former would have to represent and because the responsibilities of the two levels of government would be involved).

Thus, a plenary council equipped with substantial powers would be a serious affront to democratic values, especially since the proposed parliamentary body would be even weaker than the European Parliament.⁴⁴ The *ad hoc* agreement approach would suffer from some of the same defects, but they would be limited because the agreements themselves would be limited and related directly to mutually agreed common tasks.

The same could be said of another potential deficit, the joint-decision trap. A unanimous decision-rule can lead to paralysis. With each side having a veto on key matters, there are few incentives to compromise and no deadlock-breaking mechanisms. The greater the range of issues covered in the partnership agreement and the broader the authority of the council, the greater this danger and the more constrained all governments would be in responding to their own needs and priorities. This powerful logic is what lies behind Parizeau's hostility to partnership: why gain independence only to subject oneself to constraints imposed by the polity one just left? The same logic would apply to the governments and citizens of the ROC.⁴⁵

Again, this point strongly argues against the comprehensive model and in favor of the *ad hoc* approach.

Readers may ask if they have not seen this *ad hoc* approach somewhere before. Indeed they have. The Canada-US relationship is not defined completely by the NAFTA. It was preceded by and is still accompanied by a myriad other agreements, large and small. Some are

between the governments of Canada and the United States, others are between contiguous provinces and states. Some, like the International Joint Commission, are long standing, others are temporary. Interdependence and integration breed a broad set of solutions, even without an overarching set of political institutions governing the relationship. This may be the most appropriate model for Canada and an independent Quebec.

Another useful analogy lies not in government but in civil society. Many Canadian associations and interest groups have divided on linguistic lines, establishing separate Quebec and Canadian organizations. For some, at least, this split has not precluded the development of *ad hoc* ways to cooperate and collaborate with respect to shared interests and common goals. This model too could prefigure a post-sovereignty relationship.

Conclusion

The idea of partnership goes well beyond the question of whether and how the secession of Quebec might be achieved. Rather, it assumes secession would be accompanied by the building of a new relationship that, in effect, would be a two-unit confederation, in which two sovereign countries agreed to create a new, if limited, level of government, with authoritative decisionmaking institutions made up of representatives of each.

This *Commentary* began with the premise that such a model should not be rejected out of hand. Rather, it should be evaluated on its merits. Would such a model serve the interests of Canada-without-Quebec and of Quebec itself? Would it be preferable to the obvious alternatives, in which Canada and Quebec would simply treat each other as any two countries in the international arena or in which the two established a simple free trade area on the NAFTA model?

I identified several reasons why the broader relationship might be desirable. Between Quebec and the ROC, the degree of interdependence and the pervasiveness of linkages — in industry, labor, and financial markets and at the level of citizens and groups — is far greater than that between any two separate countries, even Canada and the United States. Maintaining and building these relationships would indeed be critical after a “yes” referendum. And doing so would require more than the negative integration stipulated by a few rules on freedom of trade. Measures to sustain positive integration in infrastructure, communications, and financial institutions would also be needed.

Positive integration requires not a single, once-and-for-all set of rules but rather a set of ongoing adjustments to changing circumstances. Without it, the economic integration of Quebec and the rest of Canada would likely deteriorate rapidly.

A second reason to take partnership seriously relates to Quebec public opinion. Whether the province is inside or outside Confederation, any long-term solution to the Canadian question must involve ways of responding simultaneously to Quebec’s sense of itself as a distinct national community and to its sense of identity and linkage with Canada. Both a model of federalism that insists on the undifferentiated equality of the provinces and one that seeks outright independence are at odds with the desires of the vast majority of Quebecers. The weight of their opinion wavers between recognition of Quebec’s particularity within Canada and sovereignty combined with close association. If federalism cannot accommodate the first aspiration, then perhaps it should regard the second with more sympathy.

Thus the grounds for looking carefully at proposals for partnership are both practical and normative. Yet powerful objections exist. Some are expressed by Quebec sovereignists who do not wish to constrain the independ-

ence for which they would have struggled so hard. But most come from outside Quebec.

As I have argued, for most Quebecers, the move from reformed federalism to sovereignty-partnership would be just one step along a continuum. For most other Canadians, it would be the crossing of a Rubicon politically, legally, and emotionally. Reforming federalism and negotiating secession are totally different games. It would be an immense stretch for those outside Quebec to move from the anger, hostility, loss of confidence, and sense of betrayal that a decision to secede would produce to a calm, deliberate, cost-benefit analysis of partnership. It is even less likely that they would take pride in establishing a new partnership when the old one had just been broken. Supporters of partnership may applaud or deplore such sentiments, but on no account can they be ignored.

Opinion about sovereignty would also be divided in the ROC. Some business interests, anxious to avoid disruption, would probably support it, at least in some areas. Ontario, with its strong economic and historic ties to Quebec, might be sympathetic. So would the Atlantic provinces, anxious to minimize the costs of Pakistanization. The Western provinces, with fewer ties, would be far less likely to be sympathetic. Yet any partnership would require nationwide consent.

Moreover, negotiating a broad partnership agreement would also face numerous practical impediments. Who would be at the table? What role would the provinces play, in both the development of an agreement and its implementation? How would it be ratified and incorporated into the Canadian Constitution? How would the discussion of partnership relate to two other crucial processes going on at much the same time: the formal accession to sovereignty, and the necessary rearrangement and reconstitution of the ROC after secession?

Many of the issues to be resolved are both highly charged and highly complex. Even when

negotiations did get under way, they would likely be drawn out — even as both sides had to grapple with the consequences of private actors and markets taking matters into their own hands.

More generally, it would be immensely difficult to operate a two-unit confederation. The decision-rule problem seems insurmountable. Any strong partnership model poses serious questions about democracy and accountability and about autonomous effective governance.

Hence, I conclude with a paradox: there are strong reasons to support the idea but powerful objections to its desirability and workability. The answer, in my view, is that there would and should be a relationship but not one in the form proposed by the PQ in its current legislation: a kind of master agreement setting out a list of shared functions and a set of institutions with specified powers and decision-rules. The PQ's promise to Quebecers — that with sovereignty and a partnership, life would be much as it was before — could not be met with or without such a partnership.

Rather, the regime that developed would be more *ad hoc* and incremental. It would comprise not a single agreement but a large number of limited, highly specific arrangements in particular policy areas where both sides felt harmonization and coordination would be useful. These agreements could form and dissolve with considerable frequency, the only test being their mutual utility.

The institutional arrangements, participants, and decision-rules could vary widely from agreement to agreement. Most, if not all, would have no constitutional status. Most would operate at the level of consultation, information exchange, and mutual influence (as federal intergovernmental relations do currently). Few, if any, would embody authoritative decision-making binding on all sides. Something akin to the PQ's proposed council (or the current first ministers' conference) might be desirable to oversee the relationship, but it would be a

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discussion forum, not a decisionmaker. Over time, the relationships might become deeper and more intense — or they might not. But they would evolve to the rhythm of practical needs on both sides, and the initial steps would be limited, rather than expansive.

Such an informal set of arrangements might be accompanied by some other agreements. These might include: (1) the essential agreement, made in the early days of secession, necessary to contain the initial economic and political fallout of a vote for sovereignty; (2) the terms of separation themselves; and (3) a limited free trade agreement, based on

and perhaps eventually incorporated into the NAFTA.

In short, even in the most optimistic scenario, the relationships that developed after a “yes” referendum would not constitute a partnership. There would be no Canada-Quebec union like the EU, if only because the EU reflects a building process, a coming together of previously independent countries, while the Canada-Quebec partnership would be the result of “unbuilding” a previously existing federal structure. Whatever the superficial similarities of the result, the dynamics involved would be quite different.

The most likely relationship between an independent Quebec and the ROC would embody linkages appropriate to international relations between two states, albeit ones that share a continent and a wide range of common interests. Even getting to that point would require immense political skill.

Some sovereignists — Jacques Parizeau, for example — may be reassured by this analysis. Such an arrangement is all they really want anyway. But it is not the partnership that the PQ has presented to Quebecers, nor is it what Quebecers themselves want and expect if they were to opt for sovereignty. Moreover, although

many of the common needs could be met by the *ad hoc* arrangements suggested here, the degree of joint decisionmaking that would be necessary to retain a full economic union or the economic integration that currently exists would require much more. Dealing in the future with such key issues as a customs union, common monetary policy, competition, and internal trade would require the broader political arrangements implied by partnership. And that, I believe, cannot be achieved.

Notes

This paper has benefited greatly from the comments of many colleagues, notably Kenneth Boessenkool, Alan Cairns, David Cameron, Patrick Monahan, John Richards, William Robson, and Daniel Schwanen. Not all of them agree with the basic purpose and conclusions of the paper, but all helped me to clarify the argument and avoid at least some of the potholes in the road. Lee d'Anjou was a superlative editor.

- 1 *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), May 17, 1997, p. D6.
- 2 Patrick J. Monahan and Michael J. Bryant, with Nancy C. Coté, *Coming to Terms with Plan B: Ten Principles Governing Secession*, C.D. Howe Institute Commentary 83 (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, June 1996); and Peter Russell and Bruce Ryder, *Ratifying a Postreferendum Agreement on Quebec Sovereignty*, C.D. Howe Institute Commentary 97 (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, October 1997).
- 3 Alan C. Cairns, *Looking into the Abyss: The Need for a Plan C*, C.D. Howe Institute Commentary 96 (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, September 1997).
- 4 Daniel Turp, "From an Economic and Political Partnership between Quebec and Canada to a Canadian Union," *Constitutional Forum* 7 (Winter/Spring 1996): 95.
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 Lawrence Martin, *The Antagonist: Lucien Bouchard and the Politics of Delusion* (Toronto: Viking, 1997), p. 283.
- 7 Parti Québécois, National Executive Council, *Quebec in a New World*, trans. Robert Chodos (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1994).
- 8 The text of the tripartite agreement was attached as a schedule to the act. For a discussion, see Daniel Turp, "Post-Referendum Reflections: Sovereignty Is Alive and Well, Partnership Remains the Roadmap to the Future," *Canada Watch* 4 (November-December 1995): 17, 42-44.
- 9 Quebec's legal capacity to make such a unilateral declaration of independence is, of course, currently before the Supreme Court of Canada.
- 10 Jacques Parizeau, Speech to the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, London, July 5, 1995.
- 11 Lucien Bouchard, speech, Lac St. Jean, Quebec, October 25, 1995.
- 12 For a very complete summary of Quebec opinion surveys, see Maurice Pinard et al., *Un combat inachevé* (Montréal: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1997).
- 13 Quoted in Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada: The Search for National Unity* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1997), p. 247.
- 14 Louis Balthazar, "Please, Let Us Breathe," *Canada Watch* 4 (November-December 1995): 35.
- 15 This point is very well argued by Guy Laforest. See "Standing in the Shoes of the Other Partners in the Canadian Union," in Roger Gibbins and Guy Laforest, eds., *Beyond the Impasse: Toward Reconciliation* (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1998).
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 36.
- 17 Quoted in the *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), December 19, 1996, p. A21.
- 18 Denis Stairs, *Canada and Quebec after Québécois Secession: "Realist" Reflections on an International Relationship* (Halifax: Dalhousie University, Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, 1996), pp. 11-12.
- 19 For this argument, see Kenneth Norrie and Michael Percy, "A Canada-Quebec Partnership: The Economic Dimensions;" and François Rocher, "Economic Part-

- nership and Political Integration: Recasting Quebec-Canada's Economic Union," both in Gibbins and Laforest, eds., *Beyond the Impasse*.
- 20 William Robson persuasively argues that this attempt would probably be doomed by the flight of capital and that, in any case, the retention of the Canadian currency would require much cooperation on arrangements for crossborder banking, backup for Quebec banks, agreement on the debt, and so on. See his *Change for a Buck? The Canadian Dollar after Quebec Secession*, C.D. Howe Institute Commentary 68 (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, March 1995).
- 21 See John McCallum, "National Borders Matter: Canada-US Trade Patterns," *American Economic Review* 85 (June 1995): 615-623; and John F. Helliwell, "Do National Borders Matter for Quebec's Trade?" *Canadian Journal of Economics* 29 (August 1996): 507-522.
- 22 William B.P. Robson, *Dynamic Tensions: Markets, Federalism, and Canada's Economic Future*, Policy Review and Outlook, 1992 (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, 1992).
- 23 Roger Gibbins, "Getting There from Here," in Gibbins and Laforest, eds., *Beyond the Impasse*, p. 407.
- 24 Gordon Gibson, *Plan B: The Future of the Rest of Canada* (Vancouver: Fraser Institute, 1994), p. 165.
- 25 In his proposal for a Canada-Quebec Union, Philip Resnick argues that its great merit would be that English Canada would have a government of its own. "Quebec can no longer stymie senate reform; we can give our federal government a more or less significant role over culture, higher education, or social affairs, as we see fit." *Toward a Canada-Quebec Union* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), pp. 116-117.
- 26 See David Cameron and Richard Simeon, "Ontario in Confederation: The Not So Friendly Giant," in Graham White, ed., *The Government and Politics of Ontario*, 5th ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).
- 27 See Thomas J. Courchene, "ACCESS: A Convention on the Canadian Economic and Social Systems," report prepared for the government of Ontario and reprinted, with commentary, in *Assessing ACCESS: Towards a New Social Union* (Kingston, Ont.: Queen's University, Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 1997); André Burelle, *Le mal canadien*. (Montréal: Fides, 1995); and Richard Simeon, "Rethinking Government, Rethinking Federalism," in Mohamed Charih and Art Daniels, eds., *New Public Management and Public Administration in Canada* (Toronto: Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 1997). See also proposals put forward by the Group of 22, *Making Canada Work Better* ([Toronto], 1996); and the Business Council on National Issues, "Memorandum for the Honourable Frank McKenna, Premier of New Brunswick and Chairman-Designate, Council of Premiers" and "Building a Better Canada: A Declaration" (Toronto, July 15, 1997).
- 28 See Roger Gibbins, with Katherine Harmsworth, *Time Out: Assessing Incremental Strategies for Enhancing the Canadian Political Union*, C.D. Howe Institute Commentary 88 (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, 1997); and Resnick, *Toward a Canada-Quebec Union*.
- 29 F.L. Morton, "The Quebec Referendum: A View from the West," *Canada Watch* 4 (November-December 1995): 32-35.
- 30 See, for example, Resnick, *Toward a Canada-Quebec Union*, pp. 78-79.
- 31 For example, Philip Resnick proposes a complex condominium-type arrangement comprising the governments of the nine provinces and two territories, a government and parliament of English Canada with a parallel government of Quebec, and a government and parliament of the union. The parliament would be made up of elected senators on the English Canada side and of directly elected members on the Quebec side. The union government would be responsible for foreign policy, defense, international trade, finance, the environment, and citizenship. See *ibid*.
- 32 Charles Macli, "Dueling in the Dark," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), *Report on Business Magazine*, April 1991, pp. 29-39.
- 33 Gibbins, "The Institutional Parameters of a Quebec-Canada Partnership," in Gibbins and Laforest, eds., *Beyond the Impasse*.
- 34 René Lévesque, *An Option for Quebec* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968), p. 25.
- 35 Robert Young, *The Secession of Quebec and the Future of Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), *passim*.
- 36 Monahan and Bryant, *Coming to Terms with Plan B*; and Russell and Ryder, *Ratifying a Postreferendum Agreement on Quebec Sovereignty*.
- 37 This is the approach taken by Gibbins and Laforest. The commitment to partnership would emerge before a referendum; a constituent assembly would then be called, and the resulting partnership agreement then submitted to the people. See *Beyond the Impasse*, especially their "Conclusion."
- 38 Writing on the question of a common currency, Robson (*Change for a Buck?*, p. 17) captures this dilemma well:
- And from the point of view of those who seek to hold Canada together, it is imperative not to engage in discussions designed to make separation easier....[S]uch discussions are very unlikely to take place until the consequences of a "yes" vote become known. And at that point, the agendas of both governments will fill rap-

idly with other issues, sharply lowering the chances of reaching agreement on measures to preserve the currency union before a collapse of confidence destroys it.

See also a similar analysis on negotiating commercial relations in Daniel Schwanen, *Break Up to Make Up: Trade Relations after a Quebec Declaration of Sovereignty*, C.D. Howe Institute Commentary 69 (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, March 1995).

- 39 Stairs, for one, argues that “Ottawa should not, under any circumstances, agree to discuss the terms of Quebec’s postsecession relationship with Canada in advance of secession having occurred” (*Canada and Quebec after Québécois Secession*, p. 36).
- 40 Even these are complex issues that would take time to work out, especially in the tense period following a vote for separation. See Robson, *Change for a Buck?*, pp. 17–18.
- 41 Quebec, Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Quebec, *Report*, chaired by Michel Bélanger and Jean Campeau (Quebec, 1991).
- 42 See Peter Russell, *Constitutional Odyssey: Can Canadians Be a Sovereign People?* 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).
- 43 It is not too difficult to imagine reciprocal arrangements relating to linguistic minorities or both parties’ guaranteeing aboriginal self-government. Citizenship, however, would be a much more complex and tense issue. See Hartt, *Divided Loyalties*.
- 44 See R.L. Watts, “The Limitations of Recent Proposals for Confederal Solutions for Canada” (Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, Queen’s University, Kingston, Ont., 1994), mimeographed.
- 45 For such reasons, Patrick Monahan argues that creating common institutions would be in the interests of neither Canada nor Quebec. See “La sécession du Québec: considérations juridiques et politiques,” *Choix: Série Québec-Canada* 1 (June 1995): 4–24.

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