

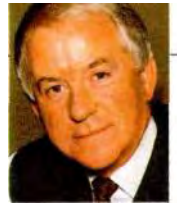
Maclean's

**SPECIAL
REPORT**

THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT

How Canadians Can Agree On Their Future





The Tools For The Job

What lingers is the untrammelled emotion of the 12 Canadians who took part in a unique *Maclean's* experiment from June 7 to 10. The magazine had formed the group by choosing its members from so-called thought clusters that Decima Research, *Maclean's* regular polling firm, had singled out as representing the dominant lines of thinking in the nation. They ranged from committed Quebec separatists to ardent centralists. They met at a secluded Ontario resort, the Briars on Lake Simcoe, with Harvard law professor Roger Fisher, a pioneer in conflict resolution theory, and two of his colleagues, Stuart Diamond and Robert Ricigliano, from the Cambridge, Mass.-based Conflict Management Group. Not only are they the best in their field, but the participants welcomed them as non-Canadians who brought a dispassionate attitude to the task given to the 12 Canadians: to see if there is still enough will and ability among representative Canadians to create a framework for a new and acceptable country. At the end of the process, they did just that—not by drafting a formal constitution or a legal document of any kind, but by developing a vision with which they all agreed, a statement of national principles and some details of a renewed federation, a package that all 12 participants enthusiastically signed. The document even contains a specific action plan for implementing the reforms that they recommended.

But one of the most striking elements of the remarkable weekend was the sheer strength of the emotional attachment

that the participants showed for Canada—either Canada as it is, or a Canada that could be. And as that kind of Canadian-ness emerged, it did so untinged by the traditional undercurrent of anti-Americanism. In fact, when Ricigliano, a young, no-nonsense Harvard law graduate, had to leave early, his attempt to depart quietly was interrupted by a woman from Quebec who had gone to the Briars as a committed separatist. She embraced him and wept openly. Then, the others followed her, some of them weeping too. Finally, Ricigliano himself began to cry and Fisher, standing in the background, began to dab at tears.

In the end, Diamond said, it seemed clear that the techniques used at the Briars could be applied on the national level to resolve some of Canada's most intractable constitutional problems. Added Diamond: "The real lesson is that a dozen people, selected for their differences and representative of various Canadian viewpoints, could, over a weekend, deal effectively with their differences and come to agreements, using a systematic process of analysis and discussion."

That observation gains significance because some prominent Canadians are now quietly discussing the establishment of a radically different constituent assembly, elected provincially and made up of about 70 citizens who are not politically active, to draw up a new constitution that would then be voted on in provincial referendums and, if approved by all of them, would be adopted by all legislatures in the country to become law. Fisher's conflict resolution methods would be a priceless tool in such a process.

Maclean's

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Macleans

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The 15 participants, left to right: Stuart Diamond, John Prall, Viola Cerezke-Schooler, Charles Dupuis, Marie LeBeau, Roger Fisher, Sheila Simpson, Karen Adams, Carol Geddes, Cyril Alleyne, Karren Collings, Richard Miller, Colin Finn, Robert Lalande and Robert Ricigliano.

THE PEOPLE'S V

How Canadians can surmount differences to agree on their future

"Conflict is a growth industry. People are going to bump into one another ever more frequently, and we need more and more skills to deal with it."
—Conflict resolution expert and Harvard law professor Roger Fisher, addressing participants in the *Maclean's* forum on national unity

They knew nothing about one another except that they had all been chosen for their differences. At the invitation of *Maclean's*, 12 Canadians had travelled as far as 3,000 miles to spend three days together, discussing Canada's future at a critical time in the nation's history. They met at a secluded Ontario resort, under the glare of TV lights and the watchful gaze of a team of *Maclean's* reporters and editors. The time was short, the pressure was intense and, still, they managed to work some magic. Asked to come up with a vision for the future of Canada, they began their task with a remarkable, and entirely unpredictable, decision: they chose three broad topics for discussions, only one of which involved specific constitutional issues.

Another was the economy. And the third was what they called "mutual understanding"—focusing on a failure to communicate that they said was at the heart of Canada's current crisis. What is more, the 12 agreed—both in their own deliberations and in the nation at large—that those three elements should be discussed concurrently. In doing so, the participants effectively plucked the national unity debate from the legalistic, constitutional pigeonhole where Canada's leaders have kept it, and placed it squarely amid the daily concerns of every Canadian.

Their imaginative approach led them to produce a wide-ranging 16-page statement of "joint suggestions" for reinventing the nation (analysis: page 26; text: page 52). It also confirmed the theory that led *Maclean's* editors to convene the forum in the first place. Even as unity commissions and task forces crisscrossed the nation in the wake of the collapse of the Meech Lake accord a year ago, a critical element was missing from the national debate: real dialogue. While those commissions have been valuable in giving many Canadians a chance to air their complaints, they have not provided a forum for productive discussion of the issues among Canadians with differing views. It seemed likely that if that kind of forum could be created, some novel recommendations would emerge.

To that end, *Maclean's* presented a challenge to its regular polling firm, Toronto-based Decima Research: to identify the main patterns of thought that together provide a portrait of the national psyche, then provide names of people who fall into those categories. The first part of the process, known in modern polling circles as "cluster analysis," took several months (Decima's process: page 62). Next, Decima staff began phoning Canadians with an 83-part questionnaire, searching for the people who correspond to those definitions. By early May, *Maclean's* had a shortlist of 35 Canadians with firmly held beliefs that spanned the spectrum of six clusters of thought, ranging from so-called Firm Federalists through compromise-seeking Peacemakers to Hard Quebec Separatists.

Then, through a series of follow-up interviews, *Maclean's* reporters



and editors narrowed the field to 11 articulate potential participants, from Berwick, N.S., to Richmond, B.C., all willing to defend their points of view, and all of them interested in meeting with people of differing opinions. By agreement with Decima, *Maclean's* chose one other participant, a native Canadian, from outside the process, because traditional telephone polling methods do not achieve a representative sampling from widely dispersed small native communities. With that, a group of six women and six men was in place (profiles: page 12).

Meanwhile, *Maclean's* had also undertaken a search for the best possible assistance in leading the group to a productive discussion. All leads almost invariably pointed to the breeding ground of modern conflict

ERDICT



ARTWORK BY DAN FELL

resolution practices, the Harvard Negotiation Project based in Cambridge, Mass. Expertise in the new negotiation methods has been growing rapidly in Canada over the past decade. But Canadian practitioners would inevitably bring an emotional stake, and regional bias, to the process. As well, most of them are practising techniques that they, or their teachers, learned at Harvard. As a result, *Maclean's* chose the strongest possible combination of objectivity and expertise, and called on the services of the guru of conflict resolution, Harvard University law professor Roger Fisher. A veteran of dispute settlement in many of the hot spots of the world, Fisher, 69, developed the theory of "principled negotiation," in which the search for common interests replaces argu-

ment over non-negotiable demands. He and two of his colleagues accepted the challenge of helping divergent Canadians rediscover the interests they share (their technique: page 58; profiles: page 66; their report: page 68).

The encounter took place from June 7 to 10 at the Briars, a picturesque resort 80 km north of Toronto on the shores of Lake Simcoe. Its 1840s-vintage main building and spacious, treed grounds provided an attractive backdrop for a crew from the CTV television network, who recorded the weekend's events for a special edition of the public-affairs program *W5* on Sunday, June 30.

Did the participants save the country? That was never the intention of *Maclean's*, Decima or the negotiating group in undertaking the project. But the conclusions that they reached, and which all of them signed, point clearly to the social, economic and political problems that frustrate Canadian nationhood. More hopefully, they also indicate many of the ways in which these representative Canadians believe that those problems might be solved.

Many of their dozens of suggestions challenge specific institutions to take on particular tasks, from school boards arranging more student exchange programs within Canada to the office of the prime minister initiating a national economic plan to identify and take advantage of Canada's competitive strengths. They also call for a broad range of political and constitutional reforms primarily aimed at making government more directly responsive to the wishes of voters.

The two Quebec separatists participated fully in an exercise aimed at designing a better Canada, and one of them ended the weekend saying that she had to seriously rethink her beliefs. They also agreed, along with the native participant, that despite their inclinations, the pros and cons of *all* the various constitutional options should be examined thoroughly before Canadians reach any final conclusion. Their joint declaration said: "And before making any decision to abandon the goal of a Canada for all Canadians, we should look with equal care at what would be a realistic vision of a sovereign Canada, a sovereign Quebec and self-government for the First Nations."

Did the event provide any lessons for the country as a whole? Twelve Canadians, representing widely divergent views of the country's problems, demonstrated that a discussion that followed a course radically different from traditional negotiations can lead individuals away from rigidly held positions and into a concerted effort to define and defend their collective interests. In the end, all 12 strong-minded participants, chosen for their differences, put their signatures on a single vision of a way towards a better Canada. Remarked Richmond Crown counsel Richard Miller, while not budging from his Firm Federalist position: "I changed from trying to convince the rest of the group to buy as much of my ideas as possible, to reaching an agreement that would make all of us satisfied." Added Montreal lawyer Charles Dupuis, a self-described sovereigntist: "I observed the willingness of people to listen. That may be a start."

Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark has laid the groundwork for a new 30-member parliamentary committee to study the unity issue, starting in the fall. But so far, he has not committed the government to bringing non-politicians into the process, or to providing for constructive dialogue. Even the government's just-completed consultative initiative did not do that. The Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future, chaired by former journalist Keith Spicer, spent \$27.4 million trying to "deepen the dialogue" by listening to about 400,000 Canadians in public and private meetings, telephone calls and mailed-in reports from local gatherings across the country.

It will report on June 27. But its process rarely allowed participants to move beyond reporting on the problems to discussing possible solutions. As Nova Scotia regional co-ordinator David Hyndman said to Spicer at a May debriefing session, "In most cases, the dialogue never took place." The experience of the *Maclean's* forum indicates that if a national dialogue ever does take place, it would be an extremely productive process.

ROBERT MARSHALL

The 12 Who Shared

Forum members found common interests behind widely divergent views



They were chosen not for the common ground they shared, but because they disagreed. The 12 participants in the Maclean's national unity forum were scientifically selected by the magazine and Decima Research to represent and articulate the sweep of the country's divergent

views about the current unity crisis, from committed federalist to hard-line Quebec separatist and autonomy-seeking native Canadian. All of the participants underwent at least some change in their opinions over the course of the weekend at a lakeside retreat in Ontario. They also spoke about their new appreciation for one another's interests—and a shared sense that everyone has a role to play in solving Canada's problems.

KAREN ADAMS Toronto

Karen Adams sat by herself under the protective cover of 80-foot black-locust trees, carefully reviewing the 16-page document that she and the 11 other participants had just drafted during the *Maclean's* weekend forum on the future of Canada. Later, in an interview, the 34-year-old knitwear designer and consultant from Toronto said that the quiet reflection near the end of an intense weekend was essential. "I needed the time to digest it," she said. Like several other participants, Adams began the retreat heavily influenced by her life in business. "I felt very capitalistic coming from Toronto," she said. "But then, I realized that is why we are the strongest province financially and that what we do is important to the rest of Canada. Someone has to pay the bills." The more important discovery, she added, was realizing how much the weekend had changed her and the other participants. "When the meeting started, we were divided by geography, economics and emotions," she said. "Now, I am confident in the Canadian people. I was a bit nervous about the country, but my faith has been renourished."

Born in Oakville, Ont., Adams was educated at Burlington's Lord Elgin High School, then graduated from nearby Sheridan Community College with a diploma in fashion design in 1977. A year earlier, she had married; her husband, Ken Adams, 40, is a Toronto freelance data processor and software marketer. Adams began her own career after graduation, working for established knitwear makers for 12 years. In 1989, she started her own business. "I was nervous about going out on my own at such a time in the knitwear industry," she said. "About 50 per cent of Canada's knitting mills have closed down." That fact, she said, prompted her to participate in a subcommittee of the forum dealing with the national economy. "I see my industry crumbling," she said. "I wonder where we'll be in the next five to 10 years."

As the owner of her own fashion studio, K.A.S., Adams oversees design, stitching, styling and marketing of knitwear lines sold to retail chains and department stores. "I develop color, sizing and shape, and work with Canadian manufacturers, either domestically or abroad," she explained. She returned from a two-week visit to knitting and embroidery facilities in China only a week before the gathering. "We still try to support the domestic knitting plants, but imports are at such amazingly low prices," she said. "Other countries have the labor to do a lot of hand knitting at low wages."

She works out of a bright, cluttered second-floor office, surrounded by



colorful fabric samples, overlooking Spadina Avenue in Toronto's fashion district. Away from the office, she is a fan of the movies and ethnic cuisine. She and her husband recently bought a two-storey brick house in the leafy suburb of Leaside. Her work takes her to Montreal once a month, but Adams does not agree with Quebec separatists—Decima identified her as a Firm Federalist. During the forum weekend, she dismissed narrow definitions of citizenship as irrelevant. "When I travel abroad, I never say I am from Ontario. I almost always say I am Canadian," she said. And afterwards, she observed that the experience had confirmed her confidence in "the human spirit to nurture," adding: "If we could just draw that out, we would unite as a country."

CYRIL ALLEYNE Montreal

An ardent golfer, Cyril Alleyne gazed wistfully at the green fairways of the Lake Simcoe resort where the 12-member *Maclean's* forum had met to discuss Canada's future. "I would have brought my clubs," he said with a sigh, "but they told me I wouldn't have time for a round." The 51-year-old manager of Montreal's MGM Security, a manufacturer of vaults, safes and other equipment, said that he approached the weekend gathering with curiosity—and a little wariness. "I did not know what to expect," he said. But by the end of Sunday's groundbreaking session, Alleyne said that he was surprised at how productive the discussions had been. "I would never have thought we could do this in only three days,"

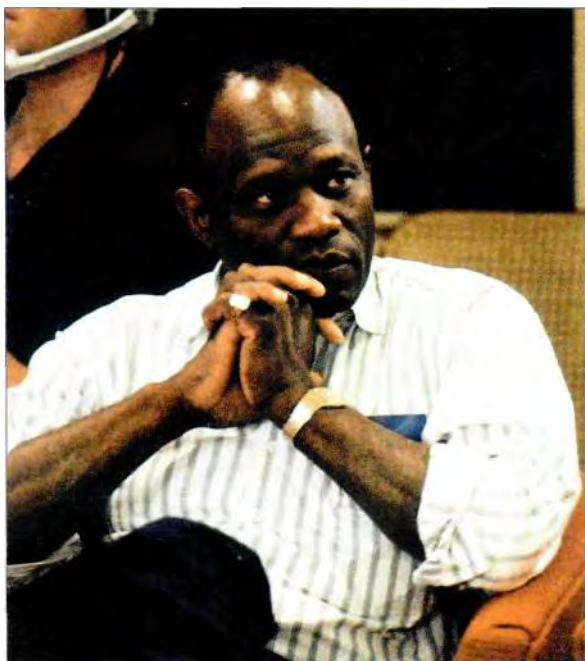
he said, shaking his head. And in the end, after the agreement on a joint statement, Alleyne did manage to sneak in five holes of golf with a set of rented clubs.

In his role as a manager, Alleyne says that he believes in delegating work and building a sense of responsibility in employees. His constitutional vision seems to take those practices into account: although he calls himself a federalist, he says that more power should flow to the provinces. Decima's analysis identified him as a Quebec Moderate. He was critical, however, of what he called the "inward-looking mentality" of people in his own province. Quebecers generally do not bother to travel, he said, or to learn enough about the outside world before making decisions about their role in it. He added: "Even when they do go outside the country, it's usually to Florida, where they stay in Hollywood—with all the other French-Canadians."

Overall, Alleyne said, he is optimistic about the future of Canada, principally because he has detected some changing attitudes among his francophone acquaintances who favor sovereignty. Said Alleyne: "A lot of the people I talk to are suddenly beginning to question the whole idea of separatism."

Alleyne immigrated to Canada from Barbados with his family in 1947, when he was 8. He grew up in the east end of Montreal, and says that his was the first black family ever to live in the immediate neighborhood. Neighbors "used to stare a lot," he said, "but we soon settled in." He served three years in the Royal Canadian Navy as a radar plotter and married a French-Canadian woman. Now divorced and living in the east Montreal suburb of Anjou, he has one daughter—Claudine, 26—a granddaughter two years old and twin month-old grandsons. A competitive sportsman, he plays Softball in a merchants' league, hockey and tennis, as well as his favorite, golf. He also enjoys music and reading.

Alleyne was one of the quieter participants during the *Maclean's* weekend, something that he himself remarked on and that he said puzzled him. "I am normally very outspoken," he said on Saturday evening, "but I seem to be very quiet now." As he left the weekend gathering, he mused: "I wondered last night, after we came up with the recommendations, about whether I spoke up enough as someone who represented English Quebecers. I guess I am a thinker before I am a talker." Clearly, Cyril Alleyne was not the only participant in the forum on Canada's future who left the sessions with a lot to think about.



VIOLA CERZKE-SCHOOLER Edmonton

Edmonton nurse and social worker Viola (Vi) Cerezke-Schooler, 54, says that she took a passionate concern about the rising rate of poverty to the *Maclean's* forum on Canada's future. "I am in horror at the events that are dismantling Canada's social safety net," she said, "and about what will happen to children and many Canadian adults." Cerezke-Schooler, a Fed-up Federalist according to Decima's analysis, added that she believes that Quebec has legitimate complaints caused by rising hunger and poverty rates, but that its best chance to retain its French culture is to stay in Confederation. Acknowledging that an independent Quebec would need to maintain its trading relationship with the United States, she declared: "The United States won't give a hoot about the French fact." She added: "English has emerged as the language of trade and commerce. Quebec cannot escape that." Still, as Cerezke-Schooler prepared to leave for Edmonton at the end of the three-day conference, she noted that many western Canadians share the sense of isolation that Quebecers feel. "If Quebec feels mistreated," she said, "it is normal to pull in. But when it understands that there are creative ways to stay together, then the province could change."

Cerezke-Schooler was born in Moose Wallow, 120 km northwest of Edmonton, and is the granddaughter of pioneer Alberta homesteaders. She graduated in psychiatric and general nursing at the Alberta Hospital in Ponoka in 1959. After working for the Alberta Social Services' child welfare department, she completed her bachelor of nursing degree at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. In 1965, she earned her bachelor of social work at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, and then worked for 14 years in family counselling in Edmonton and Calgary. Since obtaining a master's degree in sociology at the University of Calgary in 1979, she has lectured in social work at Grant MacEwan Community College in Edmonton.

An avid book collector, gardener and globe-trotter who has twice visited China—and who travelled to Guatemala the week after the *Maclean's* forum ended—Cerezke-Schooler says that her favorite Canadian city is Montreal. "I could live on St-Denis Street in one of those little walk-up apartments," she said. As well, Cerezke-Schooler says that she enjoys a wide spectrum of music, including opera. She is married to

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Herbert Cerezke, an entomologist with the federal department of forestry in Edmonton, and they have two bilingual children. Daughter Jill, 24, is a graduate of the University of Alberta in anthropology and English, and son Mark, 21, is about to begin studies at an Edmonton community college.

After the *Maclean's* forum adjourned, Cerezke-Schooler, a strong Canadian nationalist, had high praise for the conflict resolution skills that a three-member team from the Harvard-related Conflict Management Group exercised in helping the 12 participants develop their final statement. "What is clear," she said, "is that you can have strangers with no idea of Canadians, who use a process to have us say honestly what we think and are afraid of. And they allow us to suspend judgment and show us how to pick out the common ground between us." Recalling her visits to China, she added: "The Chinese interpretation of the word 'crisis' means an opportunity on the tail of the dragon. Danger also means opportunity, and we have an opportunity to create something remarkable here."



KARREN COLLINGS Fenwick, Ont.

Karren Collings lives close to the earth at her home in Fenwick, Ont., a rural community that sits high on the Niagara Escarpment among orchards and vineyards. The slender 43-year-old nurse, who now works on a casual part-time basis at the Welland County General Hospital, 10 km southeast of Fenwick, devotes a good deal of her energy to the cultivation of flowers on the one-third of an acre of land where the home sits. But when she rises from that work to relax on the deck attached to her house, Collings's view expands—on a clear day, as far as the hills of Pennsylvania, more than 150 km to the south. In a sense, her view of her country underwent a similar expansion of horizons as Collings participated in the *Maclean's* forum on Canada's future. From an opinion beforehand that the nation seemed to be heading for a breakup, she says, her outlook changed. "I realized issues are not cut-and-dried," she said. "I realized that it is not over for Quebec, that they are still ready to listen."

The impression of Quebec that Collings carried to the forum was based partly on memories of a visit 25 years ago, when she found the

people "friendly—they spoke English." Her visit as a teenager was her latest to Quebec. Although she and her husband of 21 years, Benjamin, have travelled as far afield as Florida, Mexico and Colombia on winter vacations, and from time to time make the 110-km car trip to Toronto to watch the Blue Jays play baseball, the focus of their lives is the Niagara Peninsula. He works as an industrial engineer with General Motors of Canada in St. Catharines, about 20 km northeast of Fenwick, and their only child, Christopher, 15, has just completed Grade 10 at E. L. Crossley Secondary School in nearby Fonthill.

Karren Collings's more recent impression of Quebecers, she said before taking part in the forum, is that "they are hurting—obviously from what they say about themselves and the rest of Canada." She said before the forum that she was uncomfortable with the public funding of bilingual services at the expense of other programs, even though 23 per cent of the 44,570 people who live in Welland are francophones. She also balked at the idea of an economic association between a politically independent Quebec and the rest of Canada. "To me," she said then, "that is not being part of Canada." Still, Collings, whom Decima's cluster analysis identified as a Peacemaker (compromise seeker), added: "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all agreed, Quebecers came out happy and the politicians did what we asked?"

After the forum at the Briars, Collings said that she was surprised how easily, in the end, the 12 participants "agreed to listen to one another and talk things out." In those discussions, she suggested that understanding between Canadians should be fostered among young people in the classroom and in their communities. "We will talk to the local media and the schools," she said later. For her part, Collings said that her family had been planning a summer vacation in Myrtle Beach, S.C. After her experience at the forum, however, the family now plans instead to travel to Quebec and Canada's East Coast. "That is starting small, but it is at the grassroots," she said. For a woman accustomed to working close to the earth and taking a longer view of the world around her, that is an approach that holds the promise of satisfying results in the Me of Canada.

CHARLES DUPUIS Ste-Therese, Que.

Charles Dupuis, a young Montreal lawyer who has worked actively for a sovereign Quebec, was an outspoken advocate for that cause at the *Maclean's* forum on Canada's future—and a Hard Separatist according to Decima's advance analysis. A resident of suburban Ste-Therese, Dupuis, 33, is a specialist in civil law, the junior partner in a two-man law firm that operates out of a modest suite of offices above a *caisse populaire* in Ahuntsic, on Montreal's north side. "I am a typical litigation lawyer," he says. "I love to fight." But as a participant at the *Maclean's* sessions, his weapons were as often a clear respect for the democratic process—and a fertile sense of humor—as a readiness to press deeply held convictions.

Noting that his wife, Nancy de Courval, is an archeologist—they met as teenagers but married only four years ago after he was established in law and she had graduated—Dupuis quoted Agatha Christie's jest that marrying an archeologist is reassuring because "the older you get, the more fascinating you become to them." He himself is interested in the more recent past, collecting books of 20th-century history. He sings bass in a local choir and plays golf and softball. He says that he also likes to cook, and enjoys looking after their three young children.

But during the three-day encounter, Dupuis did not shrink from cataloguing for his fellow participants his views on the differences between French- and English-Canadians and his concerns that francophone culture is threatened within Canada. Dupuis was a member of the Parti Quebecois from 1976 to 1982, but resigned from the party after its commitment to sovereignty-association weakened in the wake of the defeat of that choice in the 1980 Quebec referendum. He campaigned actively for the "yes" side in that poll. And he said that he had been concerned that the discussion with English-Canadians about the future of



the country would be bitter and hostile. "I was worried that I would feel like a Christian in a den of lions," he said. "Fortunately, I had a chair, but no whip. They respected my point of view, I think."

The lawyer said that the weekend improved his knowledge of English Canada. But the sessions did not dispel all his worries about Canada's federal system. Declared Dupuis: "This was not like St. Paul on the road to Damascus. I did not 'see the light.' One has values in life. I will not change the way I live." Indeed, Dupuis added: "Nothing has changed for me really, or for the others, I think. I still believe in sovereignty and I still think they would react with a lot of emotion to Quebec becoming independent."

Still, Dupuis said that he was impressed with the work accomplished with the help of the team of Harvard negotiation experts. He added: "If we have another meeting of the 12 of us, it would be a great comeback." The discussions never deteriorated into mudslinging matches, he noted—"the only thing you would prove by insulting somebody is how dumb you are"—adding that the final list of directions for the future of Canada produced and signed by the group was an impressive display of democracy. Declared Dupuis: "I believe in democracy, and something is a super exercise if you improve democracy."

COLIN FINN Ottawa

The weekend was over, and Colin Finn was showing clear signs of behavior modification. At 31, Finn was the youngest of the 12 participants. He was also, at first, one of the least forthcoming. But on Sunday afternoon, wielding a blue felt pen, he stood in front of his colleagues eagerly interjecting words of encouragement as he marked down their suggestions on an easel. Of his initial hesitance, he said: "I was completely unsure of what the objectives were. I had no idea if it was just going to be a bickering session. But people came prepared to talk, to get rid of excess baggage." By the close of the meeting on Monday morning, Finn was enthusiastic about the techniques that had been used to help resolve differences over national unity. "This is not selling our own ideas," he said. "It is trying to understand the basic needs of people."

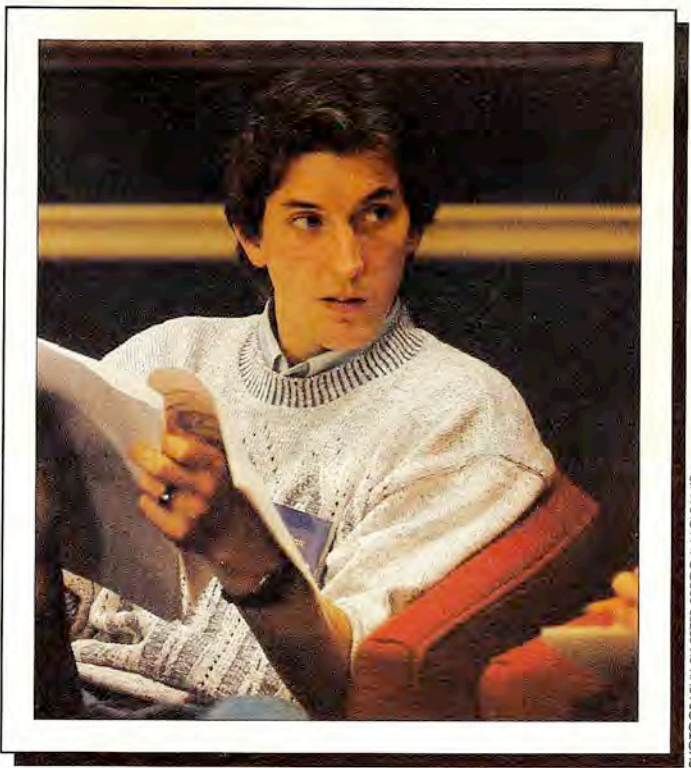
The lanky, Kingston, Ont.-born Finn is the sales director for a Canadian software company, CSI Carp Systems International, based in

Kanata, just west of Ottawa. After graduating with a degree in electrical engineering from Queen's University in Kingston in 1982, he worked for three years as a testing engineer for Mitel Corp. in Kanata before completing a master's degree in business at the University of Western Ontario in London. On graduating, he fulfilled his goal of working for a small Canadian high-technology company in the Ottawa area by joining CSI, where he started in customer service. Since then, Finn has earned equity in the company, which has grown to 30 employees from nine. He now travels three or four days a week throughout Canada and the United States. His wife, Stephanie, teaches English as a second language to high-school students who have immigrated to Canada.

Finn arrived for the working weekend a Firm Federalist, according to Decima's analysis. He told *Maclean's* that his main concern about Canada was the amount of energy being spent on the country's constitutional problems: he said that issues such as the national debt and long-term industrial strategies should be given more attention. With many people suffering through a recession and worrying about their next meal, tensions are bound to grow, he told the forum on Saturday. Declared Finn: "I think the whole constitutional debate comes down to that very fact. If you could get past the issue of Canada ripping itself apart because we don't have enough jobs to go around, people would be happy enough to live and speak whatever language comes first."

During that same brainstorming session, he addressed the frustration felt by people who see their paycheques eaten up by taxes. Said Finn: "People who are working hard and creating value for the economy deserve to be rewarded. And in Canada today, people who work hard are not being rewarded—they're being taxed. The feeling is, 'Well, why bother? If someone else can get by without working hard, I'm going to work just four days a week or take advantage of some sort of welfare program.'"

For his part, Finn said that the weekend encounter taught him the importance of the process that the three negotiators assisting the group call "principled negotiation." He added: "I don't think the object was to solve all the issues and write all the right words, but to prove the concept. I think what we accomplished is very difficult to appreciate without going through the exercise. It is not so much the content, but the fact that people can protect their interests and get what they want without compromising their position."



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER BRIGGS/MACLEANS



CAROL GEDDES Whitehorse, Yukon

Like several of the participants in the *Maclean's* forum on the future of Canada, 45-year-old film-maker and writer Carol Geddes arrived with a relatively limited agenda. She grew up in a Tlingit Indian family of nine children in the Yukon, where she witnessed discrimination firsthand, and her priority was entrenching the rights of aboriginal people within the Canadian federation. But she said that during the three-day conference, her perspective widened. "I quickly opened up to other issues," she said, "especially an increased awareness and more feeling about Canada as a whole. The experience strengthened my First Nations vision and enlarged my faith in Canada." Geddes also said that another important aspect of the forum was its inclusion of small-group workshops. Said Geddes: "That's where things really happened for me. The first night, it seemed very awkward. We were all very shy. But the small groups really brought it out." As well, Geddes said that she renewed her sympathies for Quebec sovereignty. "I had separatist friends when I lived in Montreal in the early 1980s," she said. "I understood them then, but I had forgotten the issues until this conference."

Born in a remote native community near the southern Yukon village of Teslin (population 300), Geddes is a member of the Tlingit nation's Wolf clan. She says that her roots in the northern bush allowed her "to appreciate the richness of the heritage and traditions of a culture most North Americans have never been lucky enough to share." When Geddes was 12, however, her family moved to Whitehorse, where she finished elementary school but dropped out of high school without completing Grade 9. Through most of the 1960s, Geddes recalls, she "kicked around at odd jobs" in the Yukon and northern Alberta, at first working mostly as a waitress and later as a nurse's aide. In 1970, after moving with her boyfriend of the time to Ottawa, Geddes took three months away from work to travel through Europe.

Then, in 1971, when she was 25 and working as a waitress in Ottawa, friends encouraged her to enter Carleton University as a mature student. Five years later, she graduated with distinction in English and philosophy and later went on to earn a postgraduate diploma in communications from Montreal's Concordia University. Now based in Whitehorse, Geddes is a freelance film-maker and writer. She also

served on the Canada Council's jury for general arts grants for two years and is a member of the Yukon Arts Centre Board and the territory's Development Corporation Board.

Geddes was the only participant not chosen for the *Maclean's* forum by random polling conducted by Decima Research. Decima and *Maclean's* determined early in the process that, because traditional telephone polling methods do not produce a representative sampling of Canada's widely dispersed native population, *Maclean's* would select a participant to bring a native perspective to the discussions. Geddes was chosen for her ability to articulate native concerns while not being affiliated with any specific First Nations lobby group. Her subsequent answers to the same detailed questionnaire that the other 11 participants completed, however, showed that she shared many of the views of the Fed-up Federalist cluster of thinking—looking for significant changes within the existing system.

Still close to her roots, Geddes often fishes with her relatives on ancestral lands, hooking whitefish, salmon and lake trout. She also likes to swim and hike. Much of Geddes's writing and film-making concerns her cultural links to the North and its native people. "I am totally against the melting-pot idea," she said, "where we should evolve some new image of a general multicultural person." Her first major film, *Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief*, chronicled the lives of native women who won careers over great odds. Geddes lives with general practitioner Dr. David Skinner, whom she describes simply as her "partner." Although she has supported the New Democratic Party in the past—helping to manage Yukon MP and now NDP Leader Audrey McLaughlin's first federal campaign in 1987—she left no doubt about her current priority. "Politically," she declared, "the First Nations are first."



ROBERT LALANDE Gatineau, Que.

Forty-nine-year-old Robert Lalande says that when he arrived at Lake Simcoe from Gatineau, Que., to join the other 11 members of the *Maclean's* forum on Canada's future, he felt "a little bit lost. I didn't know what I was getting into." But he added: "I didn't feel threatened." With his easygoing style and quiet, co-operative manner, Lalande fit easily into the group's discussion about emotions and relationships. A committed Quebec Federalist in Decima's analysis, he said that he was

amazed at how similar all the participants sounded after they had stripped away their political views and started talking about real human concerns. Said Lalande: "Once you remove barriers, borders and labels and you get down to the basic human core, you find out we're all the same." And at the end of the working weekend, Lalande declared: "I have more faith than I ever did before in Canada."

Lalande describes his family's heritage as "Heinz 57" because of the mix of French and Irish culture and blood. His father, John, now 76, was raised in an English-speaking family and married a francophone, Lucienne. They sent their four children, including "Bob," to French schools. Lalande met his own wife, Lise, in 1970, while both were skiing near Rouyn-Noranda, Que. The couple and their two children, Melanie, 15, and Martin, 11, speak French at home. But Lalande insists that it is in Quebec's interest to remain an integral part of Canada. "I think we need a strong central government," he said, "and that the provinces' attempts to acquire more power could be detrimental to the country as a whole."

A technical-support specialist for Xerox of Canada Ltd., where he has worked for 26 years, Lalande plays piano, skis cross-country, cycles and enjoys the family's swimming pool in his spare time. Lalande, who clearly treasures his family life, says that Canada faces the same challenges any household does: "There is the same sort of relationship between the parts of a family and the parts of Canada."

Indeed, during many of the group discussions, Lalande stressed the importance of strengthening emotional relationships and played down political arguments. One of the most crucial elements of change in Canada would be heightened "empathy," Lalande said during a Saturday morning workshop. "If you could transplant everybody's brain," he said, "if you accept the other person, you would solve a lot of these problems automatically." He also criticized media coverage of the constitutional crisis, saying that television, newspapers and magazines tend to emphasize conflict at the expense of good news. Issues that might unite Canadians receive short shrift, he added, while divisive issues are often front-page news. And Lalande, who also worked for two years in Saint John, N.B., in the 1960s, was also a strong proponent of the idea of Canadians travelling more to learn about one another's cultures and regions. In addition, although Lalande said that the *Maclean's* forum had done little to change his views, he acknowledged that the time spent with other Canadians had impressed him. Said Lalande: "I am amazed that we were able to agree on a document."

MARIE LeBEAU Hull, Que.

Marie LeBeau lifted her suitcase wearily and moved towards the airline ticket counter. After a long weekend discussing the issues of Canadian unity, the 47-year-old federal civil servant looked exhausted. Declared LeBeau: "I have only been this tired once before in my life, when I gave birth to my daughter, Annie, 20 years ago. Then, like now, I was too tired to sleep afterwards." For LeBeau, who as the weekend began was described by both Decima and herself as a Hard Separatist, the discussions among 12 Canadians left her drained and, to her surprise,

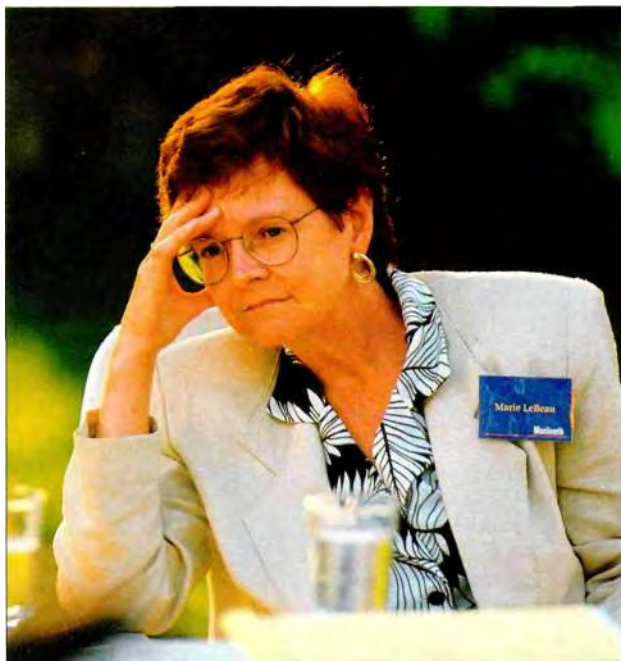
uncertain whether there is any political need for Quebec's independence.

At the outset, LeBeau had compared Canada to an unhappy marriage that would be better ended in a civil fashion. "But I also worry that that will not be possible and that we will have to talk to each other to work out some solution," she added. As the *Maclean's* forum came to a close, she seemed less certain of what she wanted for Quebec, and said: "I was decided before. I am not now. I think I lack 95 per cent of the information I need to make up my mind."

LeBeau, who is divorced and lives in Hull, on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River, decided 10 years ago to end her career as a teacher of French as a second language and to train instead to be a computer programmer. She now works for the department of supply and services, programming the massive payrolls for which Ottawa is responsible. In her spare time, LeBeau is a voracious reader of newspapers and critically compares coverage of events by Quebec-based media and their Ontario counterparts. She enjoys movies and television—in particular the series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, which she watches in English. Another

"passion" of hers is the painstaking reproduction of historical clothing in miniature, which she sews by hand for 18-inch dolls. Each dress requires up to 100 hours of labor.

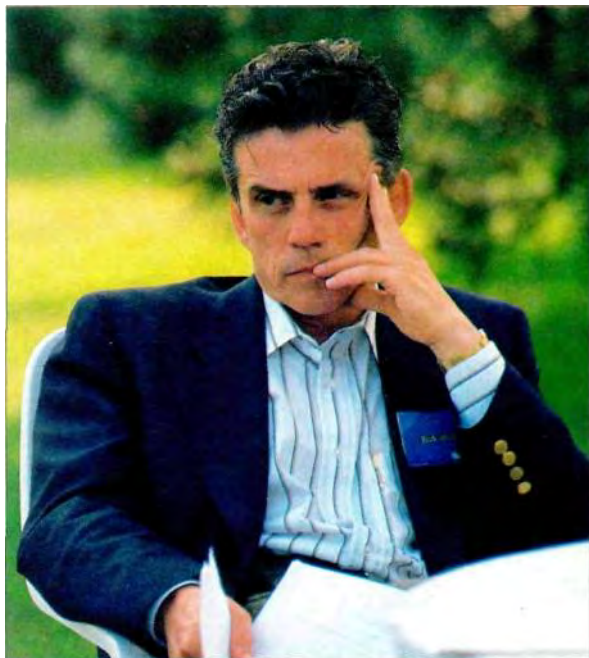
Soft-spoken and articulate in both English and French, LeBeau spent much of the weekend discussing her intense personal feelings with participants from other parts of the country and with fellow Quebecers. Indeed, for LeBeau, feelings and emotions often took precedence over any sense of specific conflict between English and French. LeBeau, who said that her family has lived in Quebec for generations, spoke several times during the weekend of the pain of rejection that she feels as part of Canada's francophone minority. And she said afterwards that talking about that pain was liberating, and that she was surprised at how sympathetic other Canadians were to her feelings. She added: "It has not gone at all the



way I expected. I thought we were going to be 12 angry people."

At a particularly emotional moment, during dinner on the Saturday night, the slim, quiet LeBeau told her companions that Canadians are like "children crying out for love," adding that "this country needs honesty." And she continued: "We are not talking separate, we are talking getting together. This is Canada, according to me. I think that this is what Canada is all about, and we have lost sight of that." Shortly after arriving at the Briars resort for the weekend, LeBeau had declared: "I left Canada a long time ago." But on Saturday night when fellow participant Karren Collings commented that both English- and French-Canadians needed to listen to each other, despite any risks they might perceive in doing that, LeBeau replied: "It is a question of survival."

Still, even LeBeau acknowledged that her readiness to consider a federalist solution may be short-lived. As the plane carrying her back home from Toronto began its descent into Ottawa on Monday evening, LeBeau sighed and shook her head. "Let us see how I feel in one month," she said. "Perhaps, with some distance, I will feel once again that there is no other solution for Quebec but some sort of independence." But at least for almost as many hours as it takes her to create a reminder of the past in a doll's costume, Marie LeBeau held the belief that Quebec and the rest of Canada should share the future together.



RICHARD MILLER Richmond, B.C.

One wall of Crown prosecutor Richard (Rick) Miller's office in New Westminster, B.C., bears a photograph of one of his heroes, federalist standard-bearer Pierre Trudeau. And Miller, a Firm Federalist according to Decima's analysis, says that when he arrived at the *Maclean's* conference, he was determined to convince other participants of the value of his own deep commitment to a strong central government in a united Canada. Three days later, he reported that his vision of Canada remained "pretty much intact." But he added that conversations with other participants, notably Montreal lawyer Charles Dupuis, who supports sovereignty for Quebec, led him to accept the possibility of "a third option." Said Miller: "I changed from trying to convince the rest of the group to buy as much of my ideas as possible to reaching an agreement that would make all of us satisfied. I went from 'me' to 'us.'" Miller also said that before the conference, as a "typical" white British Columbian, he viewed native land claims "as being taken at our expense." But after a long conversation with fellow participant Carol Geddes, a member of the Tlingit nation from the Yukon, Miller reported that he had become more sympathetic to her position.

Miller's strong views drew quick responses from other participants. His firm statement that "geographically and historically, we are the luckiest people ever" prompted Geddes to remind him of the high incidence of infant mortality and relatively short life-spans among natives. At another point, Miller displayed his wit—and needled Dupuis—with *his* definition of sovereignty-association: "My vision would be provinces sovereign in language policy, culture and civil rights. The association would look to uniformity of criminal law, the deliverability of social programs." He added mischievously: "I am describing what exists under the British North America Act."

Miller, 44, dropped out of school after Grade 10 in 1963, and worked for six years as a sawmill laborer in Vancouver's False Creek area before returning to university in 1969 as a mature student. In 1976, he graduated with a law degree from the University of British Columbia. He and his wife, Patricia, 39, a former secretary, have a son, Paul, 9, and a daughter, Samantha, six months. In his spare time, "outside of changing

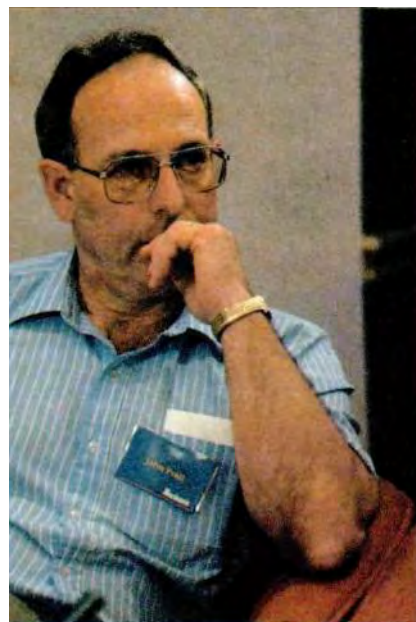
diapers," he lifts weights in a gym near his home, takes photographs and skis on the mountains that gird the region. "I have no cabin," he said with a smile. "You have to be in private practice for that." Miller also enjoys music and contributes his time to the annual du Maurier Jazz Festival in Vancouver. A former five-pack-a-day smoker, he now neither smokes nor drinks, and is currently reading Tom Robbins's novel *Skinny Legs and All* and John Keegan's *The Second World War*.

Miller says that he is angry because Canada's leaders have failed to solve the country's constitutional problems. "When I review how our politicians discussed these issues," he said, "it is almost as if they designed it to fail. There almost seemed sinister processes at work to prevent agreement among the First Ministers." He added that he emerged from the *Maclean's* conference, if not optimistic, at least "less pessimistic." Said Miller: "I am a federalist, a member of the Liberal party, but I never go to meetings. I vote—that is about all." But he says that he now counts Dupuis, who favors Quebec independence, as a friend. Miller said that later this summer, he intends to search Vancouver bookstores for French translations of some of his favorite authors to send to Dupuis. "I can't imagine where I'll find a French edition of W. O. Mitchell in Vancouver," said Miller. "But I will."

JOHN PRALL Berwick, N.S.

John Prall, 52, is a Nova Scotia-bom high-school biology teacher who grew up in the verdant Annapolis Valley, where he lives in the small community of Berwick. He came to the *Maclean's* conference as a strong federalist, confident that "Canada should not give up on itself." Three days later, in an interview on the return bus ride to Toronto's Pearson International Airport, he reflected on how much he had learned from three days of intense dialogue with 11 Canadians with widely different viewpoints. "Education is one way of getting ideas across, of changing our ideas and attitudes that Canadians have formed towards one another," said Prall, who teaches at Central Kings Rural High School in Cambridge, near Kentville, N.S. A Peacemaker (or compromise seeker) according to Decima's cluster analysis, Prall added: "I had a preconceived idea of what I would run into on a panel with Canadians from all parts of the country. But even on the bus on our way to the forum, after talking to a separatist from Quebec, we found that we were quite similar."

In 1961, Prall married another teacher, Elaine Marshall, now 49, and



later continued his own studies, graduating in physical education from the University of New Brunswick in 1971. His wife still teaches mathematics part time at Berwick Junior High School. They have five children: Craig, 29, is a chartered accountant in Bermuda; Jill, 27, is a computer specialist with a trucking firm; Roger, 24, has a degree in physical education; twin sons Ian and Paul, 21, are, respectively, students in physical education at Acadia University in Wolfville, N.S., and of business at the University College of Cape Breton in Sydney, N.S. A former centre-ice hockey player in local intermediate hockey, Prall is a Conservative and community activist now serving the final year of a three-year term as Berwick town councillor. He said that he plans to seek re-election in October. He is also chairman of the local hockey rink, coaches a minor-league hockey team and operates a swimming-pool installation business during the summer school holidays. In his remaining few hours of free time, he does woodworking and reads historical essays.

After hearing participants criticize the lack of authoritative Canadian-history texts, Prall expressed concern about the way history is taught in Canada. "I was not fully aware of the inequalities within our education system, the different histories taught in Quebec and across the country," he said. "We must get rid of the nonsense that exists now between Canadians. Part of that is due to what we teach—or do not teach—one another about Canada."

Frail's three days at the Lake Simcoe forum also made him realize how little Canadians know about one another. "We are going to have to do some touring," he told other participants shortly before the conference ended. More importantly, he added, was the need for all citizens "to see with the other person's eyes."

SHEILA SIMPSON **St. Andrews, N.B.**

Sheila Simpson, an energetic single mother of two teenagers who is also a teacher, community activist and store owner in St. Andrews, N.B., set out with mixed feelings to take part in the *Maclean's* forum on Canada's future. Apart from her regular responsibilities, the 46-year-old Simpson had been organizing an aquaculture trade fair in St. Andrews—the resort town on Passamaquoddy Bay, at the entrance to the Bay of Fundy, where she has lived for the past 14 years. "Just getting things settled enough so I could leave for a few days was exhausting," she recounted later. And as she flew to her native province—she was born in Simcoe, Ont.—she was excited about the challenge, Simpson recalled, but also apprehensive. She left the session expressing renewed optimism about Canada's future, and with an unmistakable sense of confidence.

During the initial discussion on the state of the nation, Simpson declared: "There is less tolerance and more discrimination as the economy worsens—increasing discrimination based on race or religion, or whatever the difference might be." She added that "people feel threatened individually; their own survival is at stake. They lash out at each other—or the guy lower down."

Those concerns reflected Simpson's emphasis on the importance of



the human element in Canada's efforts to surmount its political and economic problems. Indeed, although she graduated from Toronto's York University with a bachelor's degree majoring in economics, she turned to other interests because economists, she says, "were always building models and not factoring in the human beings." Instead, the compact five-foot, 1 1/2-inch graduate taught physical education for 11 years in Ontario, and "loved it." Now, in addition to running her main-street shop, Boutique La Baleine, which stocks "a little of everything" from clothing and toys to souvenirs, she teaches a St. Andrews community college class in entrepreneurship and serves on the local planning advisory committee. Simpson is also a tireless promoter of her community's attractions: during one break in discussions about the country's future, she dug into her handbag and pulled out a fistful of St. Andrews lapel pins and tourist

brochures, which she handed out to the other participants.

Simpson, flashing her good-humored grin, says that she ended up in St. Andrews "by mistake." She said that she and her husband moved there in 1977 from Kanata, Ont., in what proved to be a vain attempt to save their foundering marriage. Since the divorce, she has raised their children, James, now 17, and Naomi, 15. But Simpson is a proud advocate of many of the ideas that have taken root in her adopted province and in the Maritimes. She extolled New Brunswick's official bilingualism and the current attempts of the Maritime provinces to forge a closer economic union. But she also expressed concern about what she termed "abuse of the unemployment insurance system"—especially in regions where reliance on unemployment benefits has become entrenched—and the drag of Canadian taxes on economic performance. Declared Simpson: "The tax structure is obviously one of the factors behind cross-border shopping. We've got to become more efficient."

As the forum discussions progressed, the apprehension that Simpson experienced beforehand evaporated quickly. "I felt immediately positive about the Harvard team we were going to work with, their abilities and empathy," she said. Indeed, she added that she plans to use some of the negotiating techniques that she learned during the weekend in her community college course and on the St. Andrews planning committee, which often has fierce debates about zoning questions. And overall, the forum "certainly renewed my optimism about the country," she said afterwards.

Simpson, a Fed-up Federalist according to Decima's pre-forum analysis, said before the discussions that she felt that all regions of the country should have equal power. Afterwards, however, she said that she was pleased with the agreement that she and her fellow participants reached on a more generous and understanding approach to the country's problems. "I think my friends and family will be amazed at what we accomplished," she said. "I think one of the most important things this weekend brought home to me is that the more responsibility you give people, the better they perform." And for Sheila Simpson, that belief clearly means that Canadians, faced with the responsibility of dealing with challenges to their country's very survival, may in the end perform better than many people expected.

JOHN HOWSE and NANCY WOOD



Negotiator Robert Ricigliano (second from left) discusses details with Dupuis (left), LeBeau and Miller: a human dimension

A Canadian Renewal

Representative citizens find new ways to reinvent the country



They were Canadians. And as Canadians, their conclusions were characteristically modest: no ringing declaration of rights or statement of demands, but "joint suggestions" for their fellow citizens to consider. Each of the 12 participants in the *Maclean's*

weekend forum on Canada's future was articulate and concerned for the country, but no one was an expert in the framing of constitutions or the procedural details of politics. And they were working under a severe time constraint: three days in which to determine whether they could develop a vision for a united Canada. As a result, their proposals were predictably incomplete. Not all were original. Many of them were parallel to initiatives that are already under way. And all are open to criticism of one sort or another. But, taken together, the suggestions that bear the signature of all 12 participants are an inspiring joint creation. And as the authors intended, they represent significant steps

towards a country "in which all Canadians would feel fully accepted, at home, fairly treated and with an appropriate balance between national concerns and local autonomy" (full text: page 52).

The participants concluded that change must extend far beyond the dry wording of the Constitution. They pointed to three critical areas that require attention. Under the subheading "Mutual Understanding," their proposals call for a conscious effort on the part of Canadians to open their hearts and minds to the differences among the regions, cultures and communities that make up the nation. On economic matters, they urge Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to restore direction to the economy by convening leading industrialists, researchers and consultants to draw up a "national plan" that would see the country's resources used to the greatest national advantage. And they suggest sweeping change at the sclerotic heart of the political impasse: Ottawa. Their recommendations, if implemented, would dramatically weaken the power of all political parties, forcing elected representatives to become far more responsive

to their voters. "That would create a Canada you could believe in," commented Marie LeBeau, a computer programmer from Hull, Que., who came to the forum a committed separatist, as the proposals took shape. As her enthusiasm mounted, she added: "Don't you like it? Wouldn't it be fun?"

That new Canada would certainly respond to concerns that have been raised with growing urgency well beyond the pastoral tranquillity of the Briars resort in central Ontario, where the forum gathered. A flurry of recent opinion polls—including the seventh annual *Maclean's*/Decima year-end poll, published in January—have underscored the priority that Canadians place on restoring confidence in the economy, as well as their profound disillusionment with the institutions of Parliament.

Many of the experts canvassed by *Maclean's* about the forum's proposals also strongly endorsed the conviction that no constitutional tinkering can succeed if Canadians fail to overcome their entrenched regional and communal jealousies. "The problem we have," said Thomas d'Aquino, president of the nonpartisan Business Council on National Issues, "is that people are so suspicious of everyone else's agenda. That is really the big challenge."

At the same time, the 12 Canadians devoted comparatively little attention to some of the most heated issues that dominate the debate among constitutional experts. The question of language was raised and briefly discussed—but proved not to be highly contentious. Neither multiculturalism nor Quebec's demand for explicit recognition in the Constitution as a "distinct society" emerged as pivotal points. As for the thorny problem of what formula should replace the current unwieldy method of amending the Constitution, the participants acknowledged that they were not equipped to offer specific new suggestions.

Still, the forum participants reached agreement on creative resolutions to critical challenges that confront the country in three key areas. Indeed, polls and other soundings of public opinion offer strong support for the priorities set out by the *Maclean's* forum in its united attempt to define a new Canada. In *Maclean's* year-end poll, 59 per cent of Canadians surveyed said that economic concerns—ranging from taxation to unemployment—outranked national unity as the most important issue facing the country. A poll by Gallup Canada Inc. later the same month reached a similar conclusion.

There is a comparable national consensus that politicians must become more responsive to those who elect them: 60 per cent of Canadians questioned in the *Maclean's* poll said that they wanted a more direct role in the decisions of government; 77 per cent said that governments should be required to consult the public before making major decisions. Later reports by other pollsters buttressed those findings as well. Gallup, for one, reported that almost three-quarters of respondents to a May 1 to 4 poll said that Canada would be better off if its leaders followed the views of the people more closely. One result, as the conclusions reached by the *Maclean's* forum suggest, could be a historic shift in favor of a government closer to the American model than the British.

On two other important issues, the 12 Canadians who participated in the *Maclean's* forum appear to reflect accurately the views of their fellow citizens. In conclusions due to be released this week, the federal Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future, chaired by Keith Spicer, will report its finding that "the majority of Canadians" now demand that the unresolved claims of native people should be addressed. The same theme ran throughout the conclusions of the *Maclean's* forum. The Spicer commission's report will also recommend a review of official

bilingualism, and note that "the policy is a major irritant outside Quebec and not much appreciated inside Quebec." When the *Maclean's* forum participants—six men and six women, including four Quebecers—discussed the language issue, there was surprisingly little disagreement.

At one stage, Nova Scotia biology teacher John Prall asserted that "bilingualism, legislated right across Canada, was a mistake"—a view that 63 per cent of all Canadians and 65 per cent of Quebecers share, according to Gallup. In response, the committed federalist among the Quebecers, Robert Lalonde, a technical instructor from Gatineau, near Ottawa, observed that when "you push people against a corner, they have a tendency to want to push back." He added: "It is better to do it voluntarily." Later, LeBeau told Prall that with or without the protection of official bilingualism, "I am not afraid of losing my language. I haven't lost it in 200 years."

But the *Maclean's* participants were more concerned with proposals that might unite the nation over its vast distances and divergent communities than with the divisive thrust of bilingualism. Indeed, their first recommendation had no direct bearing on either the machinery of politics or the pursuit of prosperity. "We suggest," the forum participants wrote, "that Canadians devote substantial effort to the human dimension—to understanding one another, to caring and sharing their concerns and ideas." And strikingly, they expressed a sentiment that may be far more widely held than many political leaders acknowledge. Two recent findings by Gallup, at least, point towards the same conclusion.

In one, 76 per cent of all Canadians polled—and 59 per cent of Quebecers—favored the singing of *O Canada* at sporting events. And in another, 77 per cent of people surveyed said that they considered the national CBC television network to be necessary to preserving the country. Declared participant Carol Geddes, a film-maker from Whitehorse, Yukon, expressing a shared perception among forum members: "Canadians don't know one another."

Still, after a weekend of deliberation, debate and frequently emotional encounters, the 12 Canadians who participated in the *Maclean's*

forum reached agreement on a statement of general principles that formed a four-paragraph preamble. The rest of the document that they drafted is a detailed array of specific recommendations, arranged to focus on three critical areas:

MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

In 1936, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King remarked: "If some countries have too much history, we have too much geography." Seldom has that fact been more evident. Divided by climate, topography and distance, and preoccupied with different economic imperatives, "Canadians," the *Maclean's* forum concluded, "have become increasingly concerned with their own immediate interests and those of their neighbors, their immediate community and their province—and are more likely to ignore the interests of minorities, of other groups and of other provinces."

Indeed, it quickly became apparent how little the 12 participants themselves understood one another's experiences and viewpoints. Their three-day voyage of mutual discovery, however, produced a remarkably optimistic set of suggestions for their fellow citizens. As their final document noted, "Constitutional questions have a better chance of being well handled if Canadians work together with greater understanding, empathy, tolerance, genuine concern and a willingness to share."

The forum addressed its suggestions first to Canadians themselves. Said Lalonde: "We have politicians who represent us—we elected them.



Adams: 'terrified' of government

THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT

If we want to change something in government, we had better change ourselves." But their proposals extended to specific groups, as well: to the teachers who shape the perceptions of young Canadians, to service clubs such as the Kiwanis and Rotary organizations whose networks span provincial and linguistic boundaries, to the media, and to provincial and federal governments. To the latter, the forum directed an innovative idea that reflected the members' confidence in the ability of Canadians from all walks of life to solve many of the country's problems—if politicians give them the opportunity. They urged Ottawa to appoint a commission whose objective would be "to find programs or projects in one province that are successful, and promote their replication in other areas."

Other proposals covered as wide a scope. Noting that "there are places in Canada as marvellous as those elsewhere," participants in the *Maclean's* forum urged their fellow citizens to travel more widely within the country, and, while travelling, to "establish personal contact with others through professional, business or other connections." Said participant Cyril Alleyne, a Montreal vault-and-safe company manager: "A lot of Quebecers do not visit the rest of Canada. They visit more [of] the United States than they do their own country."

To change that practice, the forum urged service clubs to sponsor package trips within Canada among their members. It also called on corporations to "consider business travel and meetings as opportunities to meet other Canadians."

But many of the participants' most compelling proposals for reintroducing Canadians to themselves were directed at schools—and at provincial departments of education. Their reasoning was straightforward: Canada's youngest citizens "are our future," said Karren Ceilings, a nurse—and mother of a teenager—who lives in rural southern Ontario. "They are the ones we should be trying to educate and help to become aware." To that end, the forum urged educators to "compare curricula with teachers from other schools in Canada for fairness," and to "invite guest speakers from different parts of Canada" into their schools.

Participants also recommended that departments of education "work with those in other provinces on curriculum changes to promote closer 'all-Canada' understanding [and] arrange, as a national project, for the writing of a good history of all Canadians for all Canadians." Declared LeBeau: "The first subject in school would be Canada 101."

That clearly is not the case now. In fact, a survey published by the Council of Ministers of Education earlier this year revealed that most provincial and territorial junior high-school and secondary-school curricula contain fewer than half a dozen courses devoted to Canadian history, geography, civics or culture. The curricula in Alberta and Quebec offer only two such courses. In addition, notes Mark Holmes, a professor of education administration at Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, the requirement for provincial certification inhibits the movement of teachers from one region to another. As a result, said Holmes, "Canadians, especially young Canadians, are very ignorant of other provinces."

Other experts note that even when courses about Canada are offered, they may contribute more to regional resentment than to mutual understanding. "You can have Canadian studies that still promote the various ideological hatreds," remarked historian Desmond Morton, principal of the University of Toronto's Erindale campus. Recalling his own Prairie school days, Morton noted: "I learned how the West was oppressed by evil easterners, because that was what was taught in Saskatchewan in 1947 and 1948." In New Brunswick, which leads all other provinces in offering its junior- and high-school students 11 Canadian studies courses—five of those compulsory—Premier Frank McKenna acknowledged: "Young people here know absolutely nothing



Studying the final draft: strong measures to make politicians more responsive to voters

about the West—and vice versa." He added: "One of the big roadblocks in achieving national unity is a complete lack of understanding of our mutual aspirations."

His comment underscored the urgency expressed by the *Maclean's* forum for individual Canadians to play a critical role in healing the divisions that rack the nation.

THE ECONOMY

The magnitude of the problem is undeniable. After 14 months of recession, more than 1.4 million Canadians are without work. Thousands of shoppers go to the United States each week to buy cheaper goods. Many corporations are also relocating there. Both groups blame Canada's high taxes, which governments in turn blame on their persistent budget deficits and on the need to fund social programs. The Canadian enterprises that remain struggle to adjust to the new realities of global competition and free trade—possibly soon to include Mexico.

For its part, the Conservative federal government has relied largely on market forces to restore the economy's vigor. But it quickly became clear that the *Maclean's* forum did not share the government's free-market convictions. Instead, the 12 Canadians urged the Prime Minister to convene a meeting of leaders in business, science and economics, and to draft with them "a co-ordinated, cohesive national industrial policy." Free trade may have expanded the playing field, the participants acknowledged, but it has not lessened—and may even have increased—

THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT

the need for a skilled quarterback to bring some order to the national economic game.

At first glance, that interventionist prescription runs counter to many of the conservative trends of the past decade. Commented John Bulloch, president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB): "The idea that you can direct economies from the centre is dead." At the same time, the participants backed away from another conservative economic tenet—the pursuit of balanced public budgets—urging governments instead to budget "responsibly."

In fact, the Briars group avoided proposing that the federal government direct the nation's economy in detail from Ottawa. Said Karen Adams, a self-employed knitwear designer from Toronto: "I'm terrified of anything that government gets involved with." The forum's proposal, instead, would invoke the federal government only to implement a plan devised largely by business to make the best use of national resources in science, education, tax policy and finance.

Still, their vision is ambitious. Its centrepiece is a committee, convened by the office of the prime minister, that would bring together representatives from the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and—despite Bulloch's skepticism—the CFIB, as well as presidents of major Canadian companies, the head of the National Research Council Canada and an array of international consultants. The committee would be given six months within which "to identify Canadian competitive strengths and propose methods to take advantage of them." Acknowledging the source of much of its inspiration, the forum added: "The policy will be modelled to some extent after the one in Japan, and may include a ministry of international trade and industry [MITI]"—the architect of that country's decennial economic "vision" statements.

Among the ideas that the *Maclean's* forum proposed for consideration by the national committee are several familiar ones: the reduction of interprovincial trade barriers; closer co-ordination among business, universities and governments over retraining programs; and financial incentives for research and development in "strategic" industries.

Others were new. Among them: mandating the National Research Council to co-ordinate research in publicly funded laboratories and relocating the federal fisheries and agriculture departments closer to the people who are regulated. Still other suggestions have proven successful in some parts of the country and appear to merit wider application. Prominent among those is a proposal—modelled on Quebec's highly successful Caisse de depot et placement, which oversees \$36 billion in provincial pension and automobile insurance funds—to encourage other Canadian pension and insurance funds to invest in new businesses.

Some critics expressed doubt that an approach based on successful models in the comparatively homogeneous corporate cultures of Japan and French-speaking Quebec can easily be transplanted to the Canadian economy as a whole. Commented the CFIB's Bulloch: "In Japan, the elevator operators give you the same bloody line as the head of Mm. In English Canada, we are so individualistic it wouldn't work."

Other experts firmly supported the forum's recommendations. Said Nancy Riche, executive vice-president of the Canadian Labour Congress: "Since 1984, we've had a market economy based on a Conservative agenda. It hasn't worked." By contrast, Riche says that the direction proposed by the *Maclean's* forum has promise—as long as representa-



Alleyne (left), Pratt: agreement that Canadians do not know their own country

lives of organized labor join business leaders in drawing up the proposed national plan. "With the right players," she said, "we may be able to do something." Noting the forum's emphasis on competitiveness, the Business Council on National Issues' d'Aquino also said that its conclusions offer an opportunity to rally the country around clear economic goals. "The ideas are there," he said. "What is missing is the consensus—and action." Added d'Aquino: "I take off my hat to these guys. You get people together and you discover a tremendous amount of common sense."

In fact, some of the group's proposals are already in place. In January, the federal government announced the creation of a Labor Force Development Board, with 22 members—16 of them representing business and labor. It began work in May to improve national training programs. Ottawa has also announced its intent to eliminate provincial trade barriers.

Despite those beginnings, however, the 12 Canadians who signed the Briars document are clearly not alone in their conviction that the economy is out of control. Said Thomas Kierans, president of Toronto's C. D. Howe Institute, a nonprofit policy research foundation funded largely by business: "People believe the Mulroney government has given up resisting market forces, and they are being cast to the wolves." That concern was clearly reflected in the Briars proposals.

THE CONSTITUTION

Just before 10 p.m. on the first night of the weekend, Ontario's Collings touched the raw heart of the issue for many Canadians. "No one is listening to us," she said. "Decisions are made before we are aware of the problem. What leadership there is, I just feel that they are laughing at us." The indictment of Canadian federalism was so damning that it might easily have been dismissed as extreme—if it were not evident that many other Canadians share Collings's view.

The language was less charged 43 hours later, when, late on Sunday afternoon, the 12 participants in the *Maclean's* forum signed the final document outlining their recommendations for a renewed nation. But the striking loss of faith in the present government's willingness or

ability to represent the people was the same. "The current system," that document states, "does not afford some peoples, regions, provinces and communities within Canada the tools needed to adequately promote their interests. . . . The government, as currently structured, is not sufficiently representative."

The forum's sharply focused proposals for reform would radically alter that structure. The power of political parties would diminish dramatically, with a corresponding expansion of the role of royal commissions in policy-making. Native Canadians would be assured of representation in the Commons—and in any other forum where matters that concerned them were discussed. And governments would be obliged to pay far closer attention to changes in public opinion.

At the same time, most of those reforms could be accomplished without the need to amend the Constitution. Indeed, the most critical proposals require little more than amendments to the Canada Elections Act—changes that Parliament can effect alone. Some, in fact, require no change in legislation at all—only a departure from the traditions of parliamentary practice.

At the heart of the forum's proposals are three related recommendations that would force elected members to become far more responsive, and less "representative," in the classical sense associated with British tradition. Those changes include fixed terms for members of Parliament and senators (an elected upper house was one of the few suggested reforms that would require a constitutional amendment); staggered elections, in which only a portion of the two chambers would face re-election at one time; and free voting by MPs, independent of party discipline. "MPs would not be bound to vote with the government," said Richard Miller, a British Columbia Crown prosecutor. At the same time, he added, "If legislation did not pass, the government would not have to resign."

Meanwhile, staggered elections, held as frequently as every two years for a portion of seats in the Commons, would "keep the party in power on their toes," argued Charles Dupuis, a litigation lawyer from Montreal. Declared Dupuis: "They would know in advance that the majority they have now could be wiped out in two years."

The goal of a more responsible government in a form that bears strong echoes of the American system may have wide appeal for many Canadians. But one of Canada's leading constitutional experts, University of Toronto political scientist Richard Simeon, noted that several of the proposed reforms require close scrutiny. Staggered elections, for one, would allow Canadians "to vote every two years," he acknowledged, "but they only vote for one-third of the House. You couldn't turf the government out in the same way." And Simeon questioned the merits of reform modelled on the United States. There, he said, "the cohesion of the party has practically disappeared." As a result, "Congress is exceptionally responsive, but it can also be almost paralysed."

Canadians will see two sets of electoral reform proposals emerge this fall, both aimed at restoring the public's shattered confidence in the political process. But it is unlikely that either will reflect the direction proposed at the Briars. The federal Royal Commission on Electoral Reform will produce one set of new proposals. Its mandate is to find ways to "strengthen the democratic rights of citizens [and] encourage effective representation." Although some Canadians made proposals similar to those advanced by the *Maclean's* forum during public hearings before the royal commission earlier this year, commissioner Pierre Fortier said

that they will not be "a significant part of whatever thrust our report will take." Instead, he said, the commission will concentrate on proposals designed to make political parties more open to new ideas from the public.

Federal Conservative House Leader Harvie Andre has also pledged to deliver recommendations this fall designed to restore MPs' credibility with voters. But, although free votes are among the proposals he is considering, Andre also made it clear during an interview with *Maclean's* that he favors strengthening the position of political parties rather than weakening them. Declared Andre: "Political parties are virtually the only institutions in the country that have an interest in trying to reach a consensus."

The *Maclean's* forum would change that perception as well. In a strikingly original proposal, the 12 men and women urged that the venerable Canadian institution of the royal commission be given a new

importance as the pre-eminent mechanism for citizens to contribute to the creation of national policy. To that end, the participants at the forum recommended that "the commission system [be] reformed so that the result of the commission's inquiry shall be turned into draft legislation to be put before the legislative bodies for debate and vote." As Montreal's Dupuis explained it, "These royal commissions, they take a few months, then the report goes onto the shelf. We should force the government to hold a vote on the report." He added: "If you don't want to use it, at least the one who is going to decide is the person I voted for."

The participants were all obviously eager to assure a greater role in the political process for native Canadians. They called for "guaranteed representation for the First Nations of Canada" in both the Commons and the Senate, as well as "in federal forums discussing issues or dealing with policy affecting the First Nations"—including any future negotiations between Ottawa and the provinces over constitutional reform. The forum members also recommended giving the First Nations a voice alongside the provinces in negotiations with Ottawa over the future of national social programs. That development, said the Yukon's Geddes, might lead quickly to the disappearance of the federal department of Indian affairs. Added Geddes, a member of the Tlingit nation: "We don't want everything always

imposed on us. We want the ability to determine what our social issues are and what the solutions are."

At the same time, Geddes, whose films document the achievements as well as the adversities of Canada's natives, made an emotional plea for understanding that the First Nations are not intent on leaving Confederation. "In fact," she said, "what the elders are saying is that we have something to give to Canada—and we would like to be able to share that."

Geddes's words captured the spirit that, often elusively, permeated the dramatic weekend at the Briars. It is a sense that may also underlie the surface anger of many Canadians who say that they have been shut out of the central institutions of their own country. Beneath their simmering frustration resides a more positive emotion: a deep desire to contribute to the reinvention of Canada as a single nation. The same hopeful emotion is manifest in the conclusions of the 12 remarkable Canadians who forged the Briars consensus.

CHRIS WOOD with
E. KAYE FULTON in Ottawa



Collings: a focus on the young

A Weekend Of Candor

At first, the group had little in common



They were strangers to one another, a disparate group of 12 Canadians united mostly by a nervous uncertainty about the weekend ahead. Travelling by plane, bus and helicopter, they came on June 7

from distant corners of the country to the privacy of the Briars resort on Ontario's Lake Simcoe to see if they could find a common vision of Canada. "We need to understand each other and appreciate some of the issues," said Viola Cerezke-Schooler, an Edmonton social worker, as she boarded the bus that would take her and seven of the others from Toronto's Pearson International Airport to the resort. But to believe that such openness could lead to a shared approach for unifying the country, she acknowledged, "may be just too idealistic."

Meanwhile, the team of Harvard University-affiliated negotiators was already at the Briars, arranging the seating in the main conference room. To a visibly nervous Roger Fisher, director of the Harvard Negotiation Project, his first attempt to grapple with the subtleties of Canada's regional discontent was like "taking a dive off the high board without knowing if there was water in the pool yet." A measure of that challenge would come early the first night, when Fisher, referring to Canada's French-English tensions, likened the country's problems to a "marriage in trouble." Carol Geddes, a Tlingit native from the Yukon, reminded Fisher that Canada's First Nations also demanded to be part of any new compact. Said a suddenly assertive Geddes: "I reject the metaphor of marriage, unless you are talking about polygamy."

Fisher and his two associates from his conflict resolution service, Conflict Management Group (CMG), would devote the Friday night session to exploring the symptoms and causes of Canada's crisis. His aim was to get the participants to start by listing their country's problems. The difficult task of getting them to explore new options for the future would wait for later in the weekend.

None of that was known to the participants themselves as they travelled to the Briars. Charles Dupuis, a Montreal lawyer and a committed Quebec sovereigntist, later recalled that he felt like a Christian on the way to the lions' den. As the bus rolled through the countryside north of

Toronto, Montreal business manager Cyril Alleyne laughingly told Dupuis: "In two or three hours, we'll all be of the same opinion, and then we will go play golf."

Consensus finally did come, although it took far longer than Alleyne predicted. What follows is the story of that journey: a remarkable, and often emotional, encounter among 12 Canadians.

OPENING SESSION, FRIDAY, 5:40 P.M.

- With the newly arrived, travel-weary participants still slightly bewildered about what was expected of them, members of the negotiating team begin the session by explaining their technique of resolving conflict.

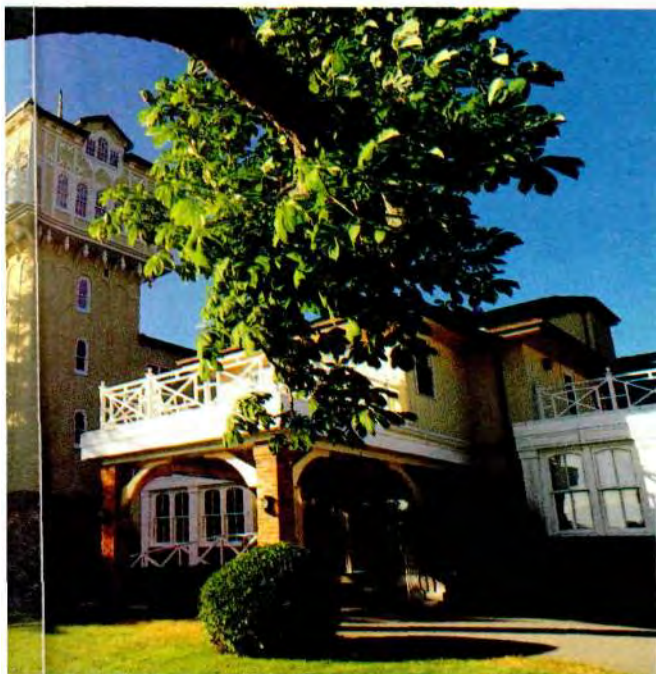
ROBERT RICIGLIANO (CMG): This reminds me of one of those old dark horror movies that you see on Saturday afternoon where there is a castle that has a perennial thunderstorm and there are 12 people mysteriously invited to some event and they spend two hours figuring out why they were invited.

Well, why we are invited is to work together, regardless of what we come in with. We've got a common problem.

STUART DIAMOND (CMG): This weekend, we hope to have a discussion about mutual concerns and interests about the future of Canada. We are experts on process, on how people talk to one another, which we have found to be at least as important as what they talk about. By analogy, many people, we found, say: 'I like to get there, I don't care what road I take.' We've found that which road you take often depends on whether or not you get there.

We are not experts on Canada. We are experts on process—the process of dealing with differences. None of us should feel pressure, because we don't have any authority to decide anything and no one is obligated to follow any of our advice.

FISHER: There is no magic in this, and the biggest mistake people make in negotiating is to decide first, and then talk and draft later. It is important to recognize our own bias. We all look at the world from the bell tower of our own village. And we want to recognize that we are biased. We



• *The opening session on Friday night (top); the Briars, where the forum took place (bottom left); LeBeau, Lalande, Alleyne and Cerezke-Schooler meet on the bus ride from Toronto (bottom right): creating a new—and realistic—option for Canada*



want to understand how others see it, by inquiring how they see it. Active listening.

DIAMOND: The trick, the challenge, is to step outside that individual bell tower and go over and take a look.

Fisher has everyone devote 40 minutes to interviewing and then introducing each other to the group. On the surface, the participants appear from that exercise to have little in common, other than a shared fondness for cooking held by Dupuis and Karren Collings, a Fenwick, Ont., nurse. Then, warning that there are "no shortcuts to specific action," Fisher encourages members of the group to express their own analysis of what is wrong in Canada. As he puts it: "OK, Doctor, tell us some symptoms, things that are going wrong. What do you think the cause is of Canada's difficulties?" What begins as a stiff, formal exercise soon loosens as the participants all realize that they do share one common perception: a dissatisfaction with the current state of the nation.

FISHER: What are some of the grievances that things aren't right now? What are some of the things that people think are wrong?

GEDDES: Lack of recognition of the people of the First Nations.

FISHER: A lack of status? I am trying to compare it with the Palestinians, with the Kurds.

GEDDES: The inability of the people of the First Nations to make decisions about their lives due to lack of recognition in the Canadian Constitution.

- As the participants give voice to their concerns, Ricigliano scrawls their responses on one of several paper flip

charts that are mounted on easels at the front of the main meeting room, a technique used throughout the weekend.

RICIGLIANO: Inability to decide about their own lives. They feel dominated. Lack of sufficient self-government.

COLIN FINN: Feeling regional inequalities; people being treated differently in different parts of the country.

RICHARD MILLER: I don't know if this is the same way of saying what Colin just said, but I believe one of the problems is the disintegration in the uniform approach to social problems in the country.

JOHN PRALL: We have to get more money out of Ottawa, to get medicare up and other programs going in poorer provinces. They are no longer uniform. Social programs are becoming less uniform.

SHEILA SIMPSON: People feel threatened individually, their own survival is at stake. They lash out at each other, or the guy lower down.

FISHER: (Nodding vigorously.) Equality becomes less important than making sure that I feed the kids.

- Dupuis introduces the subject of Quebec's growing isolation from the rest of Canada, and of what he believes is a fundamental difference in values between Quebecers and other Canadians.

DUPUIS: The problem is the perception of how to protect the rights of everybody. There is a possibility of seeing us collectively or individually. One of the main issues we have in this country is that we have a new charter of rights in Canada's Constitution. Every man has his rights. And it is, I believe, based on a typical Anglo-Saxon way of thinking, quite contrary to a francophone's way of seeing

Simpson (left) listening to Dupuis taking a sovereigntist stand on Friday night: 'One of the main issues we have in this country is that we have a new charter of rights in Canada's Constitution. And it is, I believe, based on a typical Anglo-Saxon way of thinking, quite contrary to a francophone's way of seeing things as a collective means of trying to solve a problem or to protect a right.'

things as a collective means of trying to solve a problem or to protect a right.

• Then, Geddes remarks on a theme that is to be invoked repeatedly over the weekend: that there is little tangible sense of what it means to be a Canadian because Canadians know very little about one another. Miller argues that by putting loyalty to their region ahead of the country as a whole, Canadians will pay an economic price.

GEDDES: I say, there is no Canada. Canadians don't know one another, don't travel across the country. We are all from a province or a linguistic group or we have money or we don't. Canadians? Sometimes, I think there is no Canada. That is the problem. Every province against the other one.

MARIE LeBEAU: If I had, as a foreigner, something really rotten to say about Washington state, every American is going to jump on me. But if I say something about Ontario, I am going to have allies.

KAREN ADAMS: Travelling inside Canada, I would probably say I am from Ontario, or Toronto. And I will agree that if you are out West, people will say: 'Oh, you're from the East. You get everything.'

MILLER: Western Europe is doing well and Eastern Europe is disintegrating. The tide in Western Europe is towards 'I'm a European,' and the tide in Eastern Europe is towards 'I'm a Pole, Czech' or whatever. And we seem to be picking the negative example.

• But Dupuis returns the conversation to what he sees as the source of the Canadian conflict—French-English relations—and receives an immediate reprimand from Geddes.

DUPUIS: The main cause is two main cultures that are so disliked, having two principal cultures—the Anglo-Saxon and the French-speaking.



GEDDES: I might as well make this point right now. There are more than two main cultures in Canada. The First Nations are a main culture.

DUPUIS: I'm sorry. I forgot about you. We are intruders.

• Still, he presses ahead with his point that the plight of minorities is the source of Canada's tensions.

DUPUIS: Minorities have a fear of being eaten, and they want to protect the few they have. There is always that danger of losing what you have.

FISHER: A fear of having the culture destroyed, taken away, dominated? Any vision of Canada is going to have to deal with that concern.

DUPUIS: The majority unfortunately close more doors than they open. This is a historical reality, and history is a mirror of the future. For a minority, there are two solutions: either I control my own goals and ways of doing things, [or] the second stand is to stay in the system and try to create opportunities within. But it is a gamble, and unfortunately history isn't helping the minorities in this country to take that gamble.

FRIDAY DINNER, 7:50 P.M.

• Retiring to three tables in an alcove of the Briars dining room, the weary participants slip easily into less formal conversations. But even as casual friendships are formed, the table talk reveals just how wide is the gulf of opinion that will have to be bridged. As the main course is being served, Diamond asks Miller whether Dupuis's remarks have helped identify what Quebec really wants. Replies Miller: "Not to my satisfaction. I don't understand the problem. I don't understand the threat that Quebecers like Charles perceive, or at least I don't understand how they see separation as being some solution to that problem."

Miller also blames official bilingualism for causing some of the country's linguistic tensions. The Richmond, B.C., lawyer says that he "had no particular problem with Quebec being unilingual," and notes that official bilingualism may "have hurt more than it has helped."

At the next table, Prall, LeBeau, Simpson and fellow participant Robert Lalande sit with Fisher discussing the

Geddes
(bottom left);
Simpson, Prall,
Alleyne, Fisher
and LeBeau
at Friday
dinner (above): a
common theme
throughout the
weekend is that
there is little
tangible sense of
what it means to
be a Canadian
because Canadians
know very little
about one another

politics of language. It is the only time during the weekend that the contentious issue is raised at length. LeBeau complains to her dinner companions that she feels assaulted—and insulted—by bad French grammar, which is tainted by the infiltration of English expressions. That concern was soothed by Quebec's provincial sign law, she argues, which prohibits the use of languages other than French on commercial signs. Although she later says that the law was "not necessary" and that the Quebec government "could get rid of the law tomorrow," LeBeau notes that Quebecers "were just trying to make a point."

FISHER: On the language thing, which is obviously a terribly important issue ...

LeBEAU: It is of extreme importance.

PRALL: Bilingualism, where Pierre Elliott Trudeau came in and legislated this thing right across Canada, I think was a mistake.

LALANDE: You push people against a corner and they have a tendency to want to push back. It is better to do it voluntarily rather than legislate it.

SIMPSON: Look what's happening in New Brunswick. We're getting the CoR [Confederation of Regions] party, who are sort of right-wing because they feel threatened economically and so forth because of bilingualism.

LeBEAU: So it always comes back to that: it's French Quebec and English in the rest of the country. If I move to Vancouver, I would never expect my daughter to find a school where she could study in French. It's normal. I can understand all the fuss in Winnipeg when there are 52 kids and they want a French school. Come on. Get real.

- The conversation soon moves on to the issue of Quebec's sign law.

PRALL: For your tourists coming in, or if I drive through there, I wouldn't know where I was.

LeBEAU: Do you expect bilingual signs in France?

PRALL: In France? I'm talking about Quebec.

LeBEAU: To me, that is impossible to understand. If I go to Winnipeg, I'll see signs in English and I won't freak out. And if my life depends on it, when I go to the States I'll read them in Spanish if I have to.

- Over coffee, Dupuis and Lalande recount to the American Ricigliano how the media, by emphasizing conflict, helped foster the climate of mistrust in Canada. To illustrate their point, the two Quebecers recount "the Brockville incident," when protesters wiped their feet on a Quebec fleur-de-lys flag in that Ontario city. Television coverage of the protest was shown repeatedly on Quebec newscasts.

DUPUIS: They had a Quebec flag on the ground and, one after the other, they stepped on the flag and spit on it. TV was there and the cameras showed it over and over and over.

LALANDE: This was the news media from the Quebec side. You see the perception that was left from there?

RICIGLIANO: You can see how they make a small problem look like it's a huge problem.

DUPUIS: The Canadian media, I think, don't help Canadian unity.

RICIGLIANO: The press loves to see hostile conflict. People getting along and making nice just doesn't seem to be newsworthy. There could be 90-per-cent agreement; the media wants to cover the 10-per-cent disagreement.

And it seems like there is no agreement at all. I think a lot of that has happened here.

FRIDAY EVENING SESSION, 9:40 P.M.

- After dinner, the participants return to the main conference room for a short session to recap the day. Fisher, wary of allowing the language debate to develop into a wider argument, downplays the significance of language divisions. Later in the weekend, he will tell the group that language only defines the sides of the debate. Linguistic security would be attained, he will suggest, when both sides believe that they are on a solid economic footing, and when there is a respect and voluntary acceptance of the other language group. But tonight, Fisher says only: "I am surprised at how emotional and sensitive the language question is, with so few clear identifications of what is wrong and what would be right."

As the time slips past 10 p.m., Fisher outlines his plans to the group members for the Saturday sessions. He will demonstrate, he tells them, why none of the existing visions of Canada will ever work. But any new vision, he says, will have to come from the participants. "We have analytical tools, we have no answers," Fisher says, standing at the head of the room. "You give us the answers. We give you the tools." They end the session at 10:12 p.m.

Later, Fisher and his colleagues say that they are heartened by the first day. Canada's problems have been expressed; the outpouring of grievances is—perhaps—over. Now, they have to convince the group members to listen to other points of view, and explore new solutions.

They would have been even more encouraged had they heard Collings speaking to Lalande at the breakup of dinner. Discussing Dupuis's determined defence of Quebec's position earlier that day, she said: "What he was





■ Cerezke-Schooler notes an idea while Finn, Collings and Simpson watch (above); Miller rests his head as LeBeau, Finn and Adams listen: 'We need radical surgery'



saying about being afraid of being treated like a minority was all new to me. I was more aware of the native problem [than of Quebec's grievances]. This is what I came to find out: the other side. And I learned it tonight. It's opening my eyes."

SATURDAY MORNING SESSION, 8:30 A.M.

• Conversation is stilted as the session begins. "Maybe we should have gone for a swim in the lake first," Ricigliano notes. "It is difficult to go from 'I just had breakfast' to 'Now I'm going to solve Canada's problems.'" But the participants soon become animated, especially when Miller tires of hearing the complaints about Canada and engages in an impassioned defence of the country. The outlines of the group's final document emerge as the participants list their major concerns.

Recapping what the group has already achieved, Fisher begins: "What we heard yesterday were some of the possible causes of some of the felt symptoms: economic discrimination, minority treatment, lack of representation." Now, he wants them to suggest possible broad categories for action.

SIMPSON: Is this presuming Quebec stays within Confederation?

FISHER: We are not deciding at the moment. We are going to say Quebec is undecided, Canada is undecided. We are going to see if we can create a good solution for Canada to offer Quebec. If I were advising Quebec, I would say: 'Don't decide until you know what the deal is.'

RICIGLIANO: Contrary to the normal process of events where people would decide now whether there would be independence or not, we are going to slow that process down. Let's first understand what some of the issues and demands are. Then, let's develop a full range of options.

LALANDE: I wonder if we could put it in one word: empathy, for people around you. If you could accept the other person, you would solve a lot of these problems automatically.

LeBEAU: First subject in school would be Canada 101.

COLLINGS: Let's understand each other's problems and let's stop fighting. Tell me what your problems are as a businessman and I will tell you what my problems are as an employee. And then together look at what are potential solutions.

• Later, Fisher will tell the group: "Boy oh boy. We come here as a Yankee coming north and I see all these technical arguments about the Constitution. I come back with a bunch of human beings worried about other human beings and how they understand each other. It is a refreshing, non-legalistic approach to what's going on here."

All the participants agree on the need for Canadians to find ways to simply get along better. But the conversation soon swings to the nuts and bolts of how to make a better Canada. As Miller states, "It has to be decided if we should go to more provincial control."

DUPUIS: This Constitution has to be changed, and the way to change it has to be changed.

FINN: I am hearing that we need a government to do all of these things for us, and I am of the opinion that less government involvement [is needed]. I keep hearing people say: 'Well, I am waiting for the government to solve the problems and I am waiting for the government to come up with social programs that are comfortable.' It's got to come back to individual responsibility. Canadians control their destiny.

LALANDE: We got a problem—our representation, they are our image actually, so it is our problem.

COLLINGS: Canadians tend to be too quiet. They may have a problem, but they sit and maybe grumble to themselves.

FISHER: You're sort of saying: 'Step aside. You haven't done very well. We'll take over and see what we can do.'

• At that point, with a mood of rebellion against Canadian governments threatening to sweep the room, Miller directs a strongly worded warning to his colleagues—and provokes strong responses.

MILLER: I'm getting kind of anxious here because there seems to be this fundamental assumption that there is something drastically wrong with our country that needs changing. I think that geographically and historically, we are the luckiest people ever. We live in such a wonderful place at such a wonderful time, not because we are genetically better or inherently better than other people at other times, or because of some sort of miraculous gas coming out of the earth that is creating this state. We live in

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this wonderful time and wonderful place because of the systems that were created some time ago that have worked incredibly well over the past hundred or so years.

And far from being too quiet and too apathetic, what's going on now and what's been going on in the past decade or so is that we seem to be getting noisy for the sake of getting noisy. It's quibbling, and our problems are really minor problems. And we seem to want to view them as major problems. The danger in that is that we will wreck everything. We will destroy the systems that have given us what we've got, just for the sake of change. And I see that as a really dangerous thing.

GEDDES: Do you think it's quibbling that aboriginal people have the highest infant death [rate] and the shortest life-span, the highest poverty rates of all Canadians? This great land came from somewhere.

MILLER: I'm not a Pollyanna; I'm not suggesting we are a nation without problems.

DUPUIS: With all due respect to Rick's opinion, it's not because you were always healthy and now you know you have a sickness. Don't put shades on your eyes to say: 'Well, I was always healthy and this sickness will disappear by itself.' This would be self-blindness.

RICIGLIANO: We don't want to hide the fact that we have a side ache, but we don't want to pronounce the patient terminal.

MILLER: I was just suggesting that we don't need to toss out our whole system of nutrition just because we have a side ache. Maybe just a little Band-Aid will work. Band-Aids do work sometimes.

CEREZKE-SCHOOLER: We need radical surgery.

MILLER: You don't have a lung transplant if you have a chest cold.

COLLINGS: No. But if you let a chest cold go, you get worse.

Fisher then divides the participants into three groups of four, according to their interest in discussing ways to improve three Canadian problems: the constitutional impasse, the threat of economic decline and the lack of understanding and empathy among Canadians for one another. As two of the groups head outside to work at tables on the Briars lawn, Fisher exhorts them to "turn problems into answers." The aim is to write down as many options as possible for solving Canada's problems. No ideas are to be criticized, evaluated or rejected. Or, as Diamond puts it to the economy group that he is leading, "If someone says 'Shoot the dog,' we put it up" on the flip charts.

The so-called mutual understanding group, led by Fisher, looks for ways to foster a better appreciation of other Canadians. The problem is articulated well by Nova Scotian Prall, who wistfully notes: "I've not gone to Quebec. I've not gone to Ontario to spend any amount of time. Yet I'm a teacher. It was almost a cultural shock to sit here and listen to Carol Geddes because we had no idea what problems she has." Their suggested solutions include writing a more well-rounded history of Canada and requiring governments to clearly explain where tax revenues are being spent.

The economy group expresses many of the frustrations commonly held by Canadians. Among them are fears that Canada's economic future is bleak, that Canada is over-governed and that taxes are too high. In the spirit of

examining all the options, the group suggests increasing immigration, questions the universality of social programs and considers western and Maritime union as a way to lower the cost of government.

Nearby, the Constitution group suggests several changes to the current system of government. Although it is composed of two avowed sovereigntists (Dupuis and LeBeau), a native (Geddes) and a committed federalist (Miller), the group reaches consensus on several proposed changes to the way Canadian governments operate. Most notably, the group agrees that the emphasis on party discipline for members of Parliament constrains MPs from representing the wishes of their constituents.

But signs of the tensions that will boil over in the Constitution group later that day begin to emerge in the morning session. For one thing, there is disagreement about how future constitutional negotiations should be



conducted. As Dupuis warns, "The more players, the more difficult it is to reach a fair and quick deal. We are getting sick and tired of talking about the Constitution. For the past three decades, the premiers have seen one another every year, and nothing happened."

DUPUIS: Let's call a cat a cat. Quebec needs all the powers to determine its own future.

GEDDES: Before we talk of distribution of powers, some people are not even let in the door of the forum. We don't want to be covered by the term minorities or multiculturalism. Our identity is as a First Nation. We don't want to hear we are a minority.

MILLER: You can't reject the idea of being a minority in this country. We are talking about a number of groups of minorities: First Nations, Quebec. Every participant will be a minority in this discussion. All participants are minorities, whether they are British Columbians or Quebecers. There is no such thing as a majority.

GEDDES: I accept that definition of a minority, but the word is a red flag to us.

DUPUIS: The more players you have, the harder it will be to get a consensus. The main groups concerned are Anglo Canadians and francophones, plus the natives. With [too

Constitution subgroup meeting, seated from left, Dupuis, Miller, LeBeau and Geddes: 'It is incredibly naive to think you can leave Canada and maintain some personal relationship. There would be such bad feelings.'



many] going to the table, it is going to be a hell of a party. **MILLER:** But where do Chinese-Canadians get representation? Are they anglophones?

DUPUIS: When they came here, they identified either with the French or English. They made their choice. The same players should continue—not the provincial players, but the main cultural groups.

• Ricigliano intervenes, suggesting that the group consider a system of government that would preserve the elements of Canada that are working, and devise new ways of assuaging the feelings of natives and Quebecers, who feel underrepresented. To that, Miller notes: "I included language and culture under provincial responsibility. That is a change." Seizing upon that theme, the group then agrees that, in any country, all citizens should have equal access to basic needs, such as education, but the content of particular programs should be determined by more local needs. The three groups break for a 12:25 p.m. lunch.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION, 2 P.M.

• With the entire forum reconvening as one group in the main conference room, Fisher presents four possible options for Canada's future: a strong federalist system, a loose confederation, an independent Quebec and self-government for natives. By soliciting criticisms of all four scenarios from the participants themselves, the negotiating team swiftly demonstrates that none of the alternatives could achieve majority support. The four prominent options of the day, he says dramatically, "have flunked. Every one gets shot down."

The solution to Canada's problems, says Fisher, does not lie in pushing ever harder or shouting louder for one of the four existing choices. Asks Fisher: "Can we create a new option that looks as though it has a realistic chance,

something that political leaders can say 'yes' to?"

Some of the participants remain skeptical of the approach. Pedalling a stationary bicycle in an exercise room during a break later in the day, Geddes frets openly about what she is being asked to do. "Fisher says we shouldn't shout and scream for our position," she says. "But Quebec had to do it to be heard, and natives would not be listened to today if it weren't for Elijah Harper and Oka. I am worried that natives will demand to know why I did not defend their position more firmly."

But Geddes is not yet ready to take the challenge when, as the group reconvenes at 5:50 p.m., Fisher asks if anyone wants to "shout louder for one of these four options." Along with the others, she returns to another session in the four-member groups.

Neither the economy foursome nor the mutual understanding group has major problems reaching consensus on measures that a new Canada could adopt. But as the sun casts early-evening shadows over the constitutional committee, the fragile agreements of the morning come unravelled. Both Dupuis and LeBeau balk at discussing what a new Canada would look like. "I did not change overnight," LeBeau tells Ricigliano. "I have already left Canada. I will discuss a Quebec senate, not a federal one."

Ricigliano later tries to put a good face on the breakdown, calling it a "good, rocky session." Fisher is more blunt. "There was blood on the floor," he says afterward. "It was a disaster." The problem arises when Dupuis muses about future relations between Quebec and the rest of Canada.

DUPUIS: It is possible that it would be useful to keep contacts between two sovereign states by the medium of a senate. But as two free parties, we should have equal membership. Well, three parties, with the natives. My objective is sovereignty. If they wish to have their federal government, keep it. We don't need it.

MILLER: It is incredibly naive to think you can leave

Fisher (far right) makes a point during the Saturday early-evening session: 'Let us think through what a Canadian country would look like, recognizing the grievances. We're not asking Quebec to abandon all notions of independence.'

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Canada and maintain some personal relationship, that we allow all the good things you get from this relationship to continue and leave all the things you perceive as being bad. It is not going to happen. There would be such bad feelings.

DUPUIS: My ideas are for Canada and Quebec. We both want to be prosperous. We won't cut trading. What does Canada have to lose?

MILLER: It is not that simple. You are talking about relations between two sovereign nations. How many prime ministers would there be?

DUPUIS: As many as you like.

MILLER: Not one?

DUPUIS: No. Quebec will have its own. If you want a republic, a parliament of regions, go ahead. We will choose our route. You choose yours.

RICIGLIANO: If we are going to make a decision about whether to stay together or split apart, my advice would be not to make the decision unless you take a crack at designing a system that would work.

LeBEAU: You are asking me to design a system that would make me stay?

RICIGLIANO: No. Design a system where Quebec controls what it wants.

DUPUIS: Anglo Canada cannot impose anything on French Quebec. That would be the real mess.

MILLER: But I point out that there is no such thing as a monolithic Anglo Canada.

DUPUIS: If Quebec says a clear 'no' to Canada, would Canada impose its views?

MILLER: You mean, would we send in the tanks?

• By that point, a clearly worried Fisher has adjourned his group's discussions at a nearby table and joins Ricigliano's. Other participants pull chairs alongside to listen to the discussion. Among them, Alleyne comments to fellow Quebecer Lalande and Nova Scotian Prall: "They will never resolve what's going on at that table." The evidence is in the faces of the four people at the centre of the storm: Miller and Geddes sit angrily stone-faced. Dupuis, his right leg jiggling nervously, rubs his eyes repeatedly. And LeBeau, frustrated and angry, launches into a painful, and poignant, description of how hurt Quebecers have been by what they perceive as a rejection by the rest of the country.

Patience, but in a voice tinged with concern, Fisher argues that Dupuis and LeBeau should not blindly shut themselves out of a new Canada. Says Fisher: "Let us think through what a Canadian country would look like, recognizing the grievances. We're not asking Quebec to abandon all notions of independence."

LeBEAU: The only thing I can say is that I am fed up with hurting the way I am hurting now. It is incredible. I don't have the words to say how I am hurt right now. I don't say it is right or wrong. Why have I left Canada? I don't want to hurt anymore. What lies beyond, I don't even want to know. I want to be... not here. (*In a breaking voice.*) And I think,



through the people that I meet every day, I am not alone. Friends told me: 'Go tell them. Lots of people hurt.'

FISHER: The fact that you're in pain doesn't say walk off one cliff without knowing what's there.

LeBEAU: Why take for granted it is a cliff?

FISHER: You cannot assume that because you hurt you know what the best answer is. The cost of looking at that is very small. If we can help aim your efforts in directions that hold some promise, that's better than having a sterile debate. Does that make sense?

• LeBeau responds with a hesitant "yes." Dupuis, too, agrees. "We are not being asked to sign a blank cheque," he says, then breaks the tension and provokes laughter by joking: "We take blank cheques." But the exposed and brittle nerves are still in evidence as Dupuis and Miller walk back to the main lodge together. As Dupuis tries to joke about the session, Miller cuts him off, saying: "We've got a problem, Charles."

SATURDAY DINNER, 8:30 P.M.

• The consensus, which only that morning had seemed so near, is now shattered. But the slow process of mending the group's divisions begins almost immediately. As they enter the dining room, Collings suggests that they push the three tables together so that they can eat as a group. "We can eat united, if nothing else," Miller says wryly. While waiting for dinner to be served, LeBeau, Dupuis and Lalande sit by themselves at the end of a long table, speaking to one another in French. They eulogize former Quebec premier Rene Levesque, and agree that under his leadership from 1976 to 1985, the Parti Quebecois conducted what Lalande called a "very democratic government." And they concur that both Canada and Quebec would survive independently if a breakup occurred.

Throughout the conversation, Collings moves closer to the group, finally pulling Lalande aside to ask him, of LeBeau: "Does she care that it would break Canada apart?" With Collings now included in the conversation, LeBeau

**I Talking over
1 dinner on
Saturday night,
from left, Collings,
Lalande, Alleyne,
LeBeau and Prall:
'We're not talking
separation. We are
talking getting
together. I think
we are unique
and we have lost
sight of that.
Such different
people for so long,
and we're still
together. And I
bet that 200
years from now,
we still will be.
I hope that we
still will be.'**



turns to her and says: "I confess my total ignorance of the Maritimes and the West. I know about as much about the West as I know about Belgium." It is not a question of leaving Canada, LeBeau says—"I am not in it now."

At the far end of the table, Finn, Adams, Cerezke-Schooler and Simpson discuss the day's emotional events. Says Adams: "At one point, a couple of us were emotional and Stuart said it was OK. I thought, 'Dream on, we're Canadian.'"

But after dinner, at the other end of the table, LeBeau is still giving vent to her emotions. While Fisher paces in the nearby meeting room wondering how to get the process back on track, Ricigliano joins LeBeau's table. After watching his constitutional subgroup fizzle that afternoon, the 28-year-old lawyer has concluded that the participants still need to exorcise more of their emotional demons. With Alleyne, Miller, Dupuis, Lalande and Collings listening in, he encourages LeBeau to speak.

LeBEAU: We are children crying out for love. This country needs honesty. (*Pointing at Collings, she says to Ricigliano:*) I don't want to beat her. I love her. I do. And if I told her that I don't want her to decide what happens in my daughter's school—you know what?—maybe she is not offended by the idea. But someone said she should be. How about we ask her?

We're not talking separation. We are talking getting together. This is Canada according to me. I think we are unique and we have lost sight of that. Such different people for so long and we're still together. And I bet that 200 years from now, we still will be. I hope that we still will be.

COLLINGS: And I want you to be with us, the way it should be. *Not* the way it is. The way it should be.

LeBEAU: If kids are suffering in Nova Scotia, it hurts me. And if native women suffer in the Yukon, it hurts me. And I think we all have to shut up for some time and listen. We might not like what we hear. But we have got to listen. And someone has to stand up and say: 'You people shut up.' I don't know what the answer is, but how about we listen?

COLLINGS: I think this is part of the answer.

LeBEAU: If someone says that is naive and impossible,

then I say: 'OK. I'm going home, and if your kids starve I won't even give them a piece of bread.' This is why we are so miserable and unhappy now. We want to do something.

COLLINGS: You're taking a risk by speaking. And I'm taking a risk by listening. But we need to do that.

LeBEAU: It is a question of survival to me. I don't want to lose Canada.

COLLINGS: (*Forcefully, staring at LeBeau.*) And I don't want to lose you.

LeBEAU: We are on to something here. And maybe someone should become aware that we might be losing it. Do you want to lose it?

COLLINGS: (*Shaking her head.*) No.

LeBEAU: Neither do I.

COLLINGS: That's why I'm here.

LeBEAU: God. (*Shakes her head and looks down.*) And if you tell me the only way you can survive is this way, then I think I am ready to listen to you and say: 'Well, it's never been done this way before. But maybe it can work.' (*In a whisper.*) Maybe we can try it. Tonight, I was asked to give answers. My only answer is that I am ready to try. And I would say, 'Let's get the politicians out of it.' This country is all about love and emotions, and it is the only subject we won't touch.

RICIGLIANO: (*After a long pause.*) Until tomorrow.

COLLINGS: Until tomorrow.

SUNDAY MORNING SESSION, 9:15 A.M.

• The negotiating team, having met late into the night to discuss strategy, has decided to shelve temporarily the nitty-gritty of constitutional debate. Instead, the trio wants to concentrate on ways to bridge the group's personal divisions. Says Fisher: "Canadians have to realize that they cannot ignore each other and write a piece of paper to solve the constitutional question. They can't say, 'To hell with those people, let's get the wording right.'"

Then, LeBeau turns to Geddes, imploring her to describe her own hurts. "I am at last ready to listen to you," she says. "Three days ago, I might not have listened. What do

Reviewing the final draft on Sunday afternoon (left); Collings signing the statement of national principles: reaching consensus after agreeing to include a thorough examination of the Quebec sovereignty option and self-government for First Nations

you want me to recognize? Please tell me now. Talk loudly."

And Geddes speaks. For nearly 15 minutes, she eloquently outlines how natives want to be partners in Canada. As the rest of the group is drawn into the discussion, she tells them how native elders have preserved their cultures in the face of heavy odds, and how they wish to contribute to a new Canada.

GEDDES: There is always the perception that aboriginal people are looking for something, wanting a bigger piece of the big Canadian pie. In fact, what the elders are saying is that we have something to give to Canada, and Canada can be enriched by First Nations.

DUPUIS: I have noticed that the native people have had a rough time. And it is not when it is easy that you grow, it is when it is rough. I think that it is good for them if they have the strength to pass through and get out of the rough times stronger.

GEDDES: Most of what strength we have derives from the culture. The elders have kept it strong, through the illnesses, the bad health and social conditions, poverty, alcoholism. People do sometimes grow stronger through adversity. But that same adversity has killed a lot of our people. We have the highest suicide and infant-mortality rates, and the lowest life-span in all of Canada. I can't go along completely with [the notion that] we grow stronger through adversity. No. People die.

• Fisher says later that LeBeau's willingness to listen to Geddes convinced him that a consensus could be reached. Soon after the exchange, he pulls from his pocket the first draft of a text and asks the group members for their opinions. The mood among the participants has shifted to one of mutual understanding. Dupuis apologizes to Geddes for having said that natives should be "given" rights, noting that what was needed was to "recognize" existing rights. Cerezke-Schooler tells LeBeau that other Canadians also feel despair, much of it caused by economic suffering. And



Prall urges Quebecers to stay in Canada, not because they would be poorer if they left, but because "our association with Quebec is a synergetic one in that 2 and 2 is 5."

Dupuis (left) kissing Callings on her hand before leaving on Monday: 'I observed the willingness of people to listen. That may be a start.'

SUNDAY LUNCH, 1 P.M.

V As Ricigliano types the second draft of the forum's joint document on a portable computer in the main room, the group gathers for lunch in the dining room. Clearly, some difficulties remain to be addressed. At the table, Miller and Geddes get into an angry exchange when Miller demands to know the meaning of native self-government. Geddes says

'ELECTED PEOPLE' MUST DECIDE

While the *Maclean's* forum was producing its vision of a Canada in which politicians would be more responsive to their constituents, a 17-member parliamentary committee was putting the finishing touches on a report with a somewhat different slant. During three months of hearings last winter and into the spring, the special committee in search of a new constitutional amending formula heard witness after witness call for the public's involvement in the process of rewriting the Constitution. In all, 181 submissions addressed the question of a constituent assembly—and 158 of those spoke in favor of the concept.

But when the committee's co-chairmen, Alberta Conservative MP James Edwards and Tory Senator Gerald Beaudoin, presented their report on June 20, they rejected that approach. Their recommendation: resurrect a regionally based constitutional amending

formula that was part of a reform package that failed 20 years ago—and hand the task of moulding and implementing it to politicians. "We know there are a great many criticisms of the so-called system," said Edwards. "But in the final analysis, it is elected people who must make the decisions about constitutional change."

With those words, Edwards rejected the widely popular idea of convening a special assembly of Canadians to deal with the country's constitutional problems. Clearly, it was not a statement that many Canadians—including participants in the *Maclean's* forum—wanted to hear. Indeed, the two New Democrats on the committee issued a minority statement calling for a constituent assembly to be convened.

The assembly concept also fared poorly at the 12-member Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future, the government-appointed commission led by Keith Spicer. *Maclean's* has learned that the commission initially intended to recommend a constituent assembly and other mechanisms for direct public participation in the constitutional process. But all such references, commission sources said, were watered

down, or deleted entirely, before the scheduled release of the final Spicer report on June 27.

The Beaudoin-Edwards committee revived an amendment process initially drafted at a 1971 conference in Victoria: most constitutional changes would require the approval of Quebec, Ontario, two or more Atlantic provinces, and at least two western provinces containing at least 50 per cent of that region's population. Fundamental changes now require unanimity; others can be made with the support of at least seven provinces with 50 per cent of the population.

The parliamentary committee calls for public hearings throughout the constitutional process, recommends greater involvement of native representatives (as does Spicer), and proposes a national referendum if negotiations become deadlocked. But in Canada's current constitutional climate, such measures may no longer be enough.

E. KAYE FULTON with
GLEN ALLEN in Ottawa



• *LeBeau (left) and Simpson embrace before leaving the Briars: 'We switched from being decided. I had decided before. I am not now. I feel I lack 95 per cent of the information I need to make up my mind.'*

that the specifics would evolve once the principle was recognized. But Miller calls the concept "absurd."

GEDDES: If you don't want to look at the reasons why a people want to be sovereign, then we have no chance in talking. Ever. We have laws already. What we're saying is: 'Recognize what we already have.'

MILLER: You can't do that. I'm not saying their laws are stupid, incompetent and unworkable. I'm saying the idea of sovereignty on its own is stupid and unworkable.

GEDDES: Well, if all Canadians have your view, we're going to be in the same position as Quebec: too little, too late. I can see us getting there.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SESSION, 2:10 P.M.

Despite some disagreements, the group still appears bent upon reaching agreement. Working first in small groups, then as a whole, they modify the document into its final form. In mid-afternoon, LeBeau and Dupuis hold a whispered conversation in French, reminding themselves to ensure that any agreement has to include the option of a sovereign Quebec. A reference is included to give an equally thorough examination to Quebec sovereignty—and to self-government for First Nations—before abandoning the notion of a unified Canada, and consensus appears near.

When Ricigliano rises at 5:25 p.m. to leave to catch a

plane for an assignment in Greece, the participants break into applause. He has presided over the constitutional foursome, whose volatile mix of opinions has threatened to scuttle the weekend. And he has been present during the emotional dinner conversation that pulled the group back together. Asked by Fisher if he has any "profound words" before departing, Ricigliano touches an emotional chord as he replies simply, in a choked voice, that "I suppose the way I feel now is an attachment to this group." As Ricigliano reaches for his garment bag and prepares to leave, LeBeau rushes towards him and gives him a hug. Wordlessly, the others gather around to embrace him and say goodbye, many of them crying. Ricigliano wipes tears from his cheek as he leaves the room.

The emotional moment helps to seal unanimity. An hour and 10 minutes later, after a break for a swim and a final review of the third draft, the participants drift in to sign. As the final signature is affixed, an exuberant Fisher asks: "Have you got a bottle of something?" It is 6:55 p.m.

MONDAY MORNING REVIEW, 10:40 A.M.

• With Fisher having left the Briars early in the morning for a flight to Boston, Diamond convenes the final session. Recapping what has been accomplished, he reminds the group: "The most important thing is to keep talking, to get people to the table, to buy into having a discussion." A willingness to put aside entrenched positions and to listen to other viewpoints is a common theme in the participants' closing comments.

ADAMS: I became much more aware that everyone in this room had social issues that are so important to us, a common link. And I learned that we have very different concerns. Now that I can think beyond my little world, I can say: This is important to me. But it is not that important to them out there.'

LEBEAU: We switched from being decided. I had decided before. I am not now. I feel I lack 95 per cent of the information I need to make up my mind.

MILLER: I changed from trying to convince the rest of the group to buy as much of my ideas as possible to reaching an agreement that would make all of us satisfied.

DUPUIS: I observed the willingness of people to listen. That may be a start. It's surely impossible to force somebody to listen. But we found a group of *ambassadeurs*, who might start to do so with their own people.

GEDDES: Marie, Charles, when you talk to me about the pain you felt in the past, I really, really understand that. And I understand why you want to leave. At the same time, I hope and pray that you don't.

• Just before the session, Dupuis and Miller visited the grave site of writer and humorist Stephen Leacock, who is buried in a nearby family plot on the shores of Lake Simcoe. Reading a commemorative plaque describing Leacock's writing as "essentially Canadian in character and spirit," Dupuis expressed his shock that he had never heard of a man who, to many Canadians, clearly represented so much of the nation's soul. "Is it possible that it's the same for you, that you do not know who Felix Leclerc is?" he asked Miller, referring to the late Quebec singer and poet. Miller shook his head.

"We have a problem," the two new friends agreed.

BRUCE WALLACE

To Clarify A Vision

The aim: a nation where all people feel at home and fairly treated



The Maclean's forum of 12 representative Canadians, meeting with three conflict resolution specialists, produced the outlines of a vision for a new Canada during an intensive, three-day retreat at an Ontario resort. They did not intend the document to be a definitive statement on the shape of a future Canada, but a realistic basis for further discussion and refinement. Just as important as the substantive suggestions is the fact that they were arrived at using a process under which people with dramatically different points of view could reach agreement fairly quickly, and without acrimony, on a wide range of issues. The process that led to the writing of the draft could be extended to address other issues.

The Briars, June 9, 1991

INTRODUCTION

As individual Canadians with a wide range of interests and points of view, we have some joint suggestions:

1. Rather than trying to make binding decisions now on the precise shape of Canada's future, we work together to clarify the vision of a Canada in which all Canadians would feel fully accepted, at home and fairly treated, and with an appropriate balance between national concerns and local autonomy.
2. There is no guarantee that Canadians can both create such a vision and convert it into reality, but we should certainly try. And before making any decision to abandon the goal of a Canada for all Canadians, we should look with equal care at what would be a realistic vision of a sovereign Canada, a sovereign Quebec and self-government for the First Nations.
3. A vision of Canadians working together is not simply a matter of constitutional language. We suggest that Canadians devote substantial effort to the human dimension—to understanding one another empathetically, to caring and sharing their concerns and ideas. And that they also work together to make the Canadian economy as prosperous and promising for the future as they can. On a base of human understanding and economic co-operation, constitutional questions will be far easier to resolve. We suggest that all three activities be pursued concurrently.

PART A: MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

In recent years, as a consequence of economic and political circumstances, many Canadians have become increasingly concerned with their own immediate interests, and those of their neighbors, their immediate community and their province—and are more likely to ignore the interests of minorities, of other groups and of other provinces. There is often a lack of understanding, a lack of caring, a lack of empathy and less willingness to share.

In contrast with most of the world, Canada has a record of which all Canadians can be proud. Yet many serious problems exist. Social, economic and constitutional questions have a better chance of being well handled if Canadians work more closely together, side by side, with greater understanding, empathy, tolerance, genuine concern and a willingness to share.

In many areas, much is being done. We suggest that Canadians consider further steps along the following lines to provide stronger human ties on which economic and constitutional measures can be based.

1. Individual Canadians

- Travel more frequently and widely within Canada (there are places in Canada as marvellous as those elsewhere).
- Promote cultural education about Canada's first peoples.
- Encourage children to learn about all other Canadians—their culture, language, history and way of life.
- Be a role model by being open and respectful of all Canadians.
- Check social studies, history and other courses being taught in their children's schools for fairness.
- Encourage the schools to participate in student exchanges within Canada.
- When travelling, establish personal contact with others through professional, business or other connections.

2. Schoolteachers and school leaders

- Organize exchange programs within Canada.
- Twin more schools with schools in other regions.
- Compare curricula with teachers from other schools in Canada for fairness, balance, etc.
- Invite guest speakers with different points of view and from different parts of Canada.
- Explore videotape and other options for familiarizing students with other parts of Canada.
- Travel with their students as class projects within Canada, including vacation travel.
- Use sport travel to become more familiar with all of Canada.

3. Nongovernmental organizations and entities

- Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary, etc.: promote inexpensive package trips within Canada.
- Promote awareness and use of youth hostels within Canada and the availability of college residences for summer travel.
- Business corporations: consider more business travel and meetings as opportunities to meet and work together with other Canadians on matters of common interest.

4. Provincial governments

- Co-operate in promoting travel opportunities.
- Departments of education to work with those in other provinces on curricular changes to promote closer "all-Canada" understanding.

- Arrange, as a national project, for the writing of a good history of all Canadians for all Canadians.

5. Federal government

- Appoint a commission to replicate successes. Its task would be to find programs or projects in one province (day care, recycling, halfway houses, etc.) that are successful, and promote their replication in other areas.
- Organize joint problem-solving groups. On any particular problem, get people from different parts of Canada to work together on it.
- Reduce suspicion by having an agency regularly produce popular and easily understood information, explaining, for example, where all federal tax revenues came from and on what they were spent.

6. Media

- Persuade a magazine to establish a "replicating success" feature each week which looks for successes in one community that might be replicated in others.
- Encourage bilingual publication of magazine and other articles.

PART B: THE ECONOMY

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

A co-ordinated, cohesive national industrial policy. Goals:

- Improve industry.
- Increase competitiveness in global markets.
- Create jobs.
- Assist the disadvantaged.
- Improve co-operation among all Canadians.

The policy will be modelled to some extent after the one in Japan, and may include a ministry of international trade and industry.

The likely results of the plan are:

- An expanded economic pie for all Canadians to share.
- Reduced provincial fighting over a shrinking pie.
- Reduced business risk and uncertainty about the future.
- More economic opportunities, especially for minorities, francophones and indigenous populations.
- Reduction of tension and worry.
- Increased work ethic.
- Improvement in the quality of life for all.
- Increased cohesion and co-operation in many areas.
- Increased confidence of all citizens in Canada and its ability to meet the needs of all.

Major elements of the plan would include:

- Identifying Canada's strategic economic strengths internationally—industries, skills, etc.
- Training and retraining the population to meet those strategic goals, including strengthening education.
- Providing investment and training incentives—taxes, loans, venture capital funds and so forth.
- Expanding research, and developing and targeting it to strategic industries.
- Encouraging economic co-operation among regions, provinces, companies and industries through structural means, such as joint boards.
- Providing a disciplined fiscal policy.
- Making marketing and distribution more efficient.
- Informing and consulting with the citizenry regularly.
- Ensuring that all peoples in Canada receive an equitable share of development in which they participate through ownership of natural or other resources, contribution of their labor or ideas or skills, or other effort.

SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

1. Devise a National Plan

Initiated by:

- The office of the prime minister.

Co-ordinated by a national committee with representatives from such entities as:

- Federal ministries of industry, trade and technology.
- The Canadian Manufacturers' Association.
- Canadian Federation of Independent Business.
- Presidents of some major companies/employers.
- National Research Council Canada.
- Consultants with international perspective and knowledge of models elsewhere.

Representation:

- The above organization would choose expert staffs and panels with membership from all provinces.

Consultation:

- All significant groups in Canada to be formally consulted.
- Hearings to be held.

Timetable:

- First draft report due six months after convening.

Work:

- To identify Canadian competitive strengths and propose methods, including programs outlined in this draft, to take advantage of them.
- Possibly to exist on a permanent basis to co-ordinate new ideas and spot trends.
- Study models elsewhere, including in Japan and Germany, that could be used in Canada.

2. Identify Strategic Strengths

Co-ordinated by:

- Major Canadian business schools.
- International marketing experts.
- A full-time director hired by the national committee.

Work:

- Identify those industries, skills and activities in which Canada has or could readily develop an international competitive advantage.
- Suggest the resources and skills needed to turn that advantage into money.
- Use respective provincial skills so that provinces can assist one another to strengthen their individual and collective ability to develop international markets. This can be done through production, pricing, supply and marketing decisions and strategies.

3. Train and Retrain; Provide Job Development

Co-ordinated by:

- Industry associations in targeted industries.
- Universities, trade schools, institutes of technology.
- Government departments of education—federal and provincial.

Work:

- Provide opportunities for students as early as high school to learn skills in strategic industries.
- Provide new university and college courses as necessary.
- Provide on-the-job training in key industries.
- Institute special entrepreneurial training courses in schools. Canadian Federation of Independent Business to take the lead, along with ministries of education in each province. Identify existing programs and co-ordinate

them. Replicate successes in programs and businesses.

- Upgrade provincial education and teaching in the skills needed.
- Establish day care centres in communities and companies to enable more women to work.
- Provide for job sharing as appropriate.
- Provide alcohol, drug and other rehabilitation programs to improve the quality of work life.

4. Provide Financial and Business Incentives

Co-ordinated by:

- Government and provincial finance ministries.
- Chartered banks, trust companies and other financial institutions.
- Individual companies/industries.
- Legislative committees in finance.
- Federal Business Development Bank.

Work:

- Provide tax credits/deductions to individuals and companies for tuition for training in strategic industries.
- Make guaranteed loans, where appropriate.
- Pass laws enabling pension funds and insurance companies to provide loans, start-up capital, bridge capital and other financing to new ventures.
- Co-ordinate venture-capital companies.
- Establish a special program of financial incentives for disadvantaged persons, minorities, First Nations and others.
- Establish special program of financial incentives for research and development in strategic industries.

5. Expand and Target Strategic Research and Development

Co-ordinated by:

- National Research Council Canada.
- Provincial councils.
- National laboratories.
- Appropriate legislative committees.

Work:

- Co-ordinate work in producing innovation in strategic industries.
- Serve as central clearinghouse for information on new research and development.
- Curtail duplication and inefficiency in research.

6. Improve Provincial and Local Economic Co-operation, Synergy

Co-ordinated by:

- Individual provincial premiers and staff.
- Federal and provincial regulatory agencies.
- Industries involved.
- Local community and business leaders.

Work:

- Manage key resources more effectively.
- Identify common interests in particular fields and divide the resource development, production, distribution and marketing to take maximum advantage of provincial strengths.
- Eliminate duplication.
- Reduce trade barriers among provinces and co-ordinate trade and marketing policies with foreign sources and markets.
- Use successful models where appropriate.
- Consult the industries that would benefit most from such co-operation, including transport.
- Decentralize federal regulation in fisheries, agriculture and other industries included in this area, to promote greater efficiency and co-operation.

- Develop regional economic boards to co-ordinate economic interests and development in all regions of Canada.
- Develop synergistic economic strategies and projects among Quebec and other provinces, and among aboriginal peoples and government, industry and others at all levels.
- Promote the involvement of local business and civic leaders in carrying out national industrial growth while meeting local needs. This should include designing, planning, financing and advising on the development of local industries. Local leaders and any associations they may create would assist in finding jobs for the unemployed, promote small-business opportunities and, because of that, improve the quality of life for people from diverse cultural, economic and physical backgrounds. The local development is intended to have a positive effect on the social aspects of communities through economic improvements.

7. Mandate Responsible Budgets, Federal and Provincial

Co-ordinated by:

- Federal and provincial ministries of finance.
- Legislative finance committees.

Work:

- Develop further studies to determine the best way to budget responsibly and manage overall debt, using models from elsewhere.
- Increase budget responsibility partly through greater efficiency in government operations.
- Conduct audits by outside, independent entities to eliminate and expose poor business practices and waste. Widely publicize the results.

Rationale:

- Would reduce inflation.
- Would eventually free money for social programs—money that would otherwise go to pay interest on government debt.

8. Inform Canadians of All Progress; Involve Citizens

Co-ordinated by:

- Public relations staff of national committee.
- Individual industries.
- Provinces, federal government.

Work:

- News conferences, media interviews, reports and other matters on a regular and ongoing basis.
- Institute mechanisms to receive regular feedback from Canadian citizens and businesses.
- Appoint public members to regional economic boards and other bodies.
- Widely publish regular evaluations of the strategic programs.

PART C: THE CONSTITUTION

The Problem

The current system does not afford some peoples, regions, provinces and communities within Canada the tools needed to adequately promote their economic, political and social interests. There is inadequate avenue for some people to participate in decisions that affect them. Moreover, Canada should be able to do more to care for, and improve the lives of, its people.

1. Representative Reform

A possible cause:

One cause of this problem is that the current system tends to distance elected officials from their constituents' views, needs and

concerns. The government, as currently structured, is not sufficiently representative.

A possible strategy:

One approach to dealing with this problem is to reform the system to make it more representative, to allow for greater and fairer participation and representation of all the Canadian people.

Some specific reforms might include:

- A. In the House of Commons and Senate of Canada, there shall be:
 - Free voting—members would not be required by law practice or precedent to vote along party lines (in an effort to encourage members to cast a vote based on the needs of their constituents).
 - Guaranteed representation for the First Nations of Canada.
 - Fixed terms for members, which would eliminate the concept of the government resigning if its programs are defeated.
 - Shorter terms for members of the House of Commons than for senators (in an effort to encourage members with shorter terms to be more responsive to their constituents).
- B. The Senate of Canada shall be amended so that:
 - Members are to be directly elected.
 - The number of members is to be determined by further discussion.
 - Members should be apportioned on a political or geographic basis, or some combination of the two, according to an arrangement to be determined in further discussions.
 - A specific number of seats will be reserved for representatives of the First Nations.
 - The role of the Senate shall be limited to approving, amending or rejecting legislation.
- C. The Bank of Canada shall be reformed so that each region shall be better represented on its board. The board's chairman would be appointed by the prime minister.
- D. Representatives from the national political bodies of the First Nations shall be included in federal forums discussing issues or dealing with policy affecting the First Nations (e.g. constitutional reform).
- E. Electoral reform:
 - Regular elections at fixed dates.
 - Staggered elections (e.g. a portion of senators and members of the House of Commons elected every two years), in an effort to provide short-term turnover in at least a significant portion of the Parliament and hence greater responsiveness to constituents.
 - The amount of campaign contributions from individuals, corporations and interest groups shall be further limited.
 - National political parties' spending shall be further limited.

- Recommendations should be explored by a member of the judiciary on the possibility and desirability of moving to a system of proportional representation.

2. Setting National Standards for Social Programs to Meet Basic Needs and Entitlements

A possible cause:

Another possible cause of the current situation is that there is disagreement about the apportionment of control over social programs among the federal government, the provinces, First Nations and the territories. It is difficult to balance the interests in having national standards and local flexibility.

A possible approach:

One way of approaching this problem is to allow Canadians to have more of a say in how those standards are set in the first place.

Some reforms might include:

- A. A more representative government, as described in Section 1, to decide on national standards.
- B. Wider consultation with people across Canada, especially those affected by a standard, including:
 - The commission system reformed so that the result of the commission's inquiry shall be turned into draft legislation to be put before the legislative bodies for debate and vote.
 - Public hearings.
 - Dissemination of information regarding standards via popular media.
- C. There should be more uniform national standards for access to social programs (e.g. education, health care), and more flexible standards for the content of those programs (e.g. what is taught, how health care is provided).
- D. Standards should be set to determine basic "needs" of Canadians.

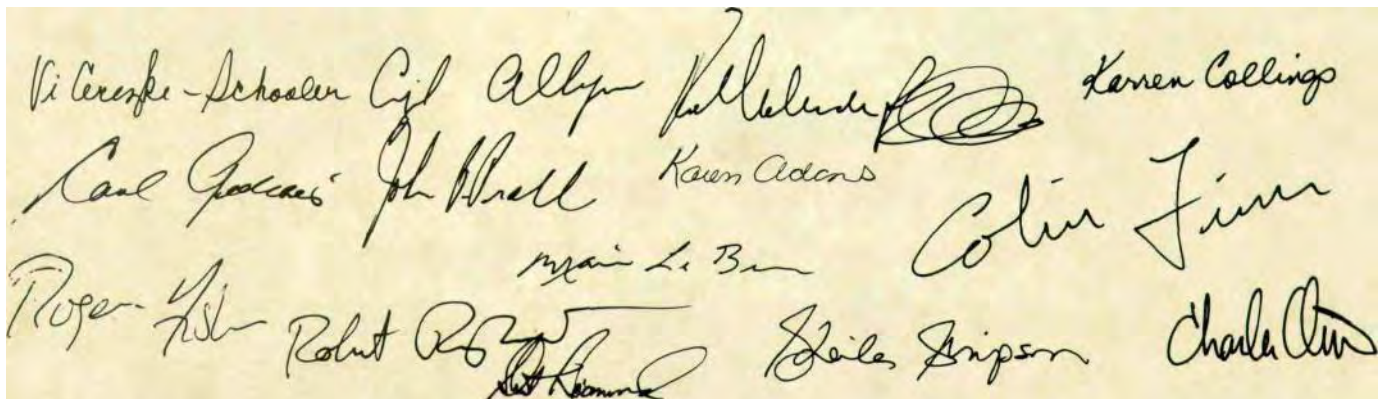
3. Process for Developing a Recommendation for a New Constitutional Amending Formula

A possible cause:

Another possible cause of the current situation is that Canadians are dissatisfied with the process for amending the Constitution, but have not been able to proceed through official channels towards changing the system. In particular, it would be difficult to produce a new formula through official channels when certain groups feel unrepresented or underrepresented in the existing process.

A possible approach:

The federal government, provincial governments, First Nations and the territories shall develop a joint recommendation for a new amending formula.



The Business Of Getting To Yes

'Many Canadians have stopped dealing with real problems. They must learn to care about each other again.'



As a member of a B-29 bomber crew in the U.S. army air force during the Second World War, Roger Fisher was taking off from a base in Guam when one of the aircraft's engines suddenly caught fire. The airplane, which had risen about 20 feet off the ground, crashed back to

earth and began sliding off the end of the runway. As the crew scrambled to leave the plane, fearful that the now-flaming aircraft would explode, the only passenger, a young marine flying for the first time, looked at them calmly. Recalled Fisher: "He stayed cool and collected—because he did not know any better. He looked at us crew members and said, "What do you guys usually do now?" "

That story, which Fisher often tells with evident relish, illustrates one of the dilemmas involved in the business of what the Harvard law professor, founder of the Cambridge, Mass.-based consulting firm Conflict Management Group, calls "getting to yes." Said Fisher, who headed the three-man CMG team that *Maclean's* enlisted to direct the discussions of its 12-member constitutional forum: "We negotiators are the people expected to have the answers—even when it is not clear if any exist." For Fisher and his colleagues at CMG, achieving that goal as negotiators involves a careful blend of timing, inquiring, directing, listening—and often, some spontaneous improvising at the bargaining table. Said Fisher's associate, CMG executive director Stuart Diamond: "We make the different sides realize that among them they have the answers. We provide the process leading to that conclusion."

That philosophy—and CMG's success in applying it—has made the group arguably the most respected and sought-after practitioner in a fast-growing international field. The 69-year-old Fisher has worked as an adviser or consultant for governments in a dozen countries, including the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Colombia, El Salvador and South Africa. He helped the U.S. government devise the procedure that led to the landmark Camp David accord between Israel and Egypt in 1978.

In fact, Fisher is credited with inventing many of the techniques now regularly used by conflict resolution specialists—including a formula called "principled negotiation," which CMG describes as the cornerstone of its philosophy. That approach contrasts with many elements of traditional negotiating, including the conviction that disputing parties should begin talks with specific, declared objectives, as well as basic undeclared final positions that they are prepared to fall back on.

The methods pioneered at Harvard University in Cambridge also have spawned an entire new industry that is swiftly taking root around the world. In Canada, where the field is still relatively new, more than 250 people attended an Ottawa conference last year studying conflict resolution strategies. Among the proponents of the process is Benjamin Hoffman, 40, a former student of Fisher's at Harvard, who founded

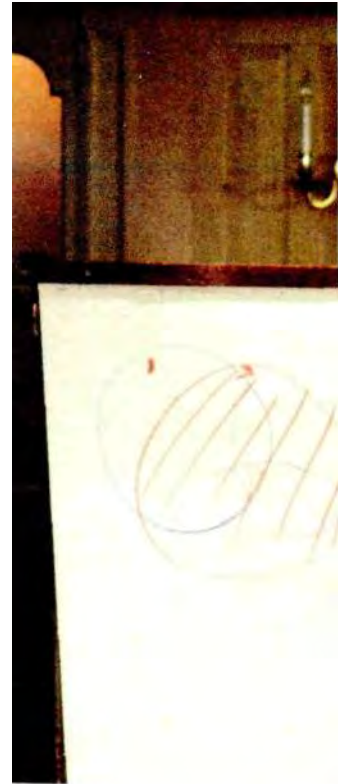
Ottawa-based Concorde Inc. in 1989. Since then, he says, his business has doubled in volume each year. His clients have included native groups, municipalities and both management and labor groups. Said Hoffman: "We are looking at a process whose time has clearly come."

In fact, he and other experts foresee a variety of new uses for their field. With litigation costs rising dramatically across North America, insurance companies are turning to conflict resolvers to help settle claims. And with environmental concerns on the rise, large companies and government authorities are beginning to use independent mediators in environmental-assessment talks to reach agreement on project development. As well, the increase in the number of native Canadian groups making land claims has created a need for specialists familiar with the complicated issues being negotiated.

But while interest in conflict management strategy grows, Fisher continues to be regarded as pre-eminent in the field. Declared Hoffman: "Roger is the first, and best." That view is clearly shared by experts in a variety of fields. Along with CMG, Fisher works with a number of related Harvard-based groups offering negotiation advice and consultation in areas ranging from diplomatic training to foreign investment, labor-management relations and corporate planning. In one of CMG's more remarkable projects last year, it trained 46 diplomats from then-Warsaw Pact countries and members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on negotiation techniques that would help them adjust to the changing relations between them. In another venture, it worked with officials and groups in Israel, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon, as well as with Palestinian diplomats, on ways to resolve their differences.

Still, Fisher said that in each situation, the basic tools he brings as a negotiator seldom change. He cites seven elements aimed at producing agreement between potential antagonists: interest, options, legitimacy, commitment, communication, relationship and alternatives away from the table. Those are building blocks for producing agreement. During the Briars session, they were used in the following ways:

- Focus on interests, not positions. The different sides are asked not to bring specific demands to a bargaining table. Rather, they are asked to list their underlying needs and interests in the hope that those will lead to



II. DIAGNOSES: SOME PR

- MINORITY TREATMENT
- LACK OF EXPERIENCE WITH
- MINORITIES
- MISCOMMUNICATIONS
- MEDIA EMPHASIS ON SELECTED ISSUES
- IGNORANCE OF CULTURE
- HISTORY OF DISCRIMINATION
- RACISM
- POLITICAL
- POLITICIANS LACK AVENUES TO
- FEED POWER
- ELECTORIAL SYSTEM
- POINT SCORING NOT PROBLEM
- SOLVING
- FEDERAL PROVINCIAL POWERS
- NOT WELL MANAGED



Fisher leading a Saturday session: 'more willingness among private citizens to be flexible than among politicians'

common ground. At the *Maclean's* forum, CMG negotiators asked the 12 participants to avoid getting mired in such traditional topics of debate as Quebec's language laws, the Meech Lake constitutional accord and what political parties they feel most comfortable with. Said Diamond at the outset: "We must avoid labels wherever possible."

- Attempt joint problem-solving. The participants are asked to work together to develop additional options beyond any proposals they have already brought to the table. That encourages them to work together and think creatively. At the June 7-to-10 retreat on Lake Simcoe, the negotiators asked federalists and Quebec sovereigntists to accept each other as people with legitimate interests who would like to be heard.

- Use objective criteria and standards. Often, one or both sides rely on their overall strength or emotions to set conditions for agreement.

- Develop new options. Throughout the *Maclean's* weekend, negotiators repeatedly told participants that they should try to think of options beyond those that had already been publicly suggested by politicians for Canada's future.

- Assess the alternative to a negotiated agreement. Each side is asked to consider realistically what the actual consequences will be if it is unable to reach an agreement with the other, and to consider whether that outcome justifies the risk. For their part, Quebec sovereigntists and Canadian federalists alike briefly considered the consequences of cutting

all ties with each other. Without asking anyone to abandon that possibility, they agreed to look first at an agreement that would keep Canada together—one that would be better for everyone than not reaching agreement.

- Separate the people from the problem. Every negotiation involves two issues: people and problems. A civil approach to the other side is far more likely to produce agreement than an aggressive, insulting manner. In fact, the CMG negotiators said that the close relationships and bonding developed among participants in the *Maclean's* forum members were significant achievements.

- Diagnose problems and individual goals. Sometimes, two sides agree on solutions that do not deal with deeper overall problems. Both sides should look beneath problems for their root causes, a process that helps find hidden solutions. The *Maclean's* participants were encouraged to look at why they and their colleagues felt personally aggrieved with the present state of Canada—and at how to change it.

- Try to understand one another's needs. Often, parties make demands that are impossible for the other side to meet. Each side should put itself in the shoes of the other side to consider each other's pressures and give choices that make it easier to agree. In three key areas—native rights, and anglophone and francophone perceptions of each other—the *Maclean's* participants said that their discussions had for the first time

THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT

given them insight into the concerns and fears of other groups. That insight, some of them said later, made it easier for them to try to satisfy the different demands.

At the same time, CMG's Robert Ricigliano introduced a relatively simple chart of a circle divided into four quadrants. Using that chart, a regular tool in the group's work, he asked participants to divide problem-solving into four stages of thought: symptoms of the problems, diagnosis, general prescriptions and specific action ideas.

In the first stage, the *Maclean's* forum participants were asked to define the gap between the current situation in Canada and their preferred view of the country. The group cited problems including the country's moribund economy, inter-regional tensions and a chronic lack of faith in the present political process.

In the second step, the group began analysing how those problems had come into existence. They mentioned factors including elected politicians' determination to vote on party lines rather than reflect the wishes of constituents; a widespread sense that the present electoral process does not properly represent the needs of different regions; and the subsequent lack of any coherent process to guide the economy.

In the third stage, the group began offering solutions. They divided into three groups of four dealing with the Constitution, the economy and the general lack of understanding among Canadians. Then, each group presented its findings and recommendations to all the participants, who discussed them further.

In the final step, the group moved towards a specific plan of action and followed the one-text procedure used at Camp David. The facilitators started with a rough draft and showed it to the participants, continually revising the text to reflect suggestions and reactions. At that point, no one made a commitment either for or against any specific wording.

After three drafts, the group reached agreement. The forum's joint statement included suggestions on how to improve the economy and increase goodwill among regions, as well as how to make politicians more accountable to the electorate. If those steps can be achieved, the document concluded, "constitutional questions will be far easier to resolve."

In addition to the seven techniques, CMG negotiators follow careful guidelines defining the way that they should conduct themselves as conciliators. Declared Fisher: "There is often a perception that a negotiator must act very tough or very soft all the time, and be consistent in that. We reject that notion." Instead, the CMG philosophy, according to Fisher, is, "Be soft on the people, but hard on the problem."

In fact, Fisher, Diamond and Ricigliano said that they worked hard to apply all their usual methods to the *Maclean's* exercise. But, the CMG negotiators added, the experience of dealing with representative Canadians in such an environment sometimes contrasted sharply with their past work. Usually, the group deals with elected politicians, professional diplomats or other trained negotiators. But in the case of the *Maclean's* weekend, Fisher said, he found the participants to be refreshing in their approach. Declared Fisher: "There is a lot more willingness among private citizens to be flexible than among politicians who continue to

worry about their past positions and what the media might say."

But the encounter at the Briars posed a different problem. Many of CMG's tactics rely on conducting negotiations in a private, informal manner, so that participants feel less pressure to posture or defend previously articulated positions. Said Diamond: "Our sessions are usually highly confidential, severely restricted." But during the *Maclean's* forum, 11 editors and reporters and one photographer from the magazine monitored developments all through the weekend, as did a 25-member television crew that was preparing a one-hour special to be aired on CTV on June 30. Said Fisher of the *Maclean's* exercise: "I have never taken what were nominally representative citizens and put them in a fishbowl with television cameras and microphones." That process, he added, was sometimes "distressing." At one stage, Fisher said, the participants' awareness of the cameras surrounding them caused them to "fall back into hardened positions, sounding like broken records." He added: "It really exacerbated the initial problems."



Forum members meeting in groups on Sunday: trying to understand one another's needs

Despite such differences, Fisher said that the process of the sessions was consistent with the original CMG plan. And, said Diamond, the way in which *Maclean's* 12 diverse and often divided participants moved to agreement on issues provides a model that could easily be used across Canada. Declared Diamond: "If this group can come up with the ideas it [managed] after two days, without millions of dollars, tremendous political clout or huge staffs, then the people who run this country ought to be able to come up with an even better list in a reasonable time."

At the same time, the CMG members developed their own impressions of Canada's constitutional debate. Declared Fisher: "Many Canadians have stopped dealing with real problems. They must learn to care about each other again—as these people learned to do." Said Diamond: "One reason Canadians have not said 'yes' to anything is that there are not enough ideas on the constitutional table." He added: "Just because Canada has been talking about things for more than 100 years does not mean it is talking about the *right* things." For both men, the key to successful negotiation—and to deciding Canada's future—requires both a new kind of talk and a renewed willingness to listen.

ANTHONY WILSON-SMITH

The Voices Of A Nation

How Decima assembled the tribes of thought



In the discordant chorus of ideas across Canada, their 12 voices expressed themselves with deliberately uneven harmony. From committed federalists through moderates and compromise seekers to Quebec separatists, the dozen Canadians brought together by *Maclean's* to

see if—stripped of their natural biases and conditioning—they could develop a consensus view of one Canada were initially united only by the depth of their different convictions. The participants in the *Maclean's* project were chosen by means of an extensive system of "cluster analysis" developed by Decima Research, *Maclean's* regular polling firm, headed by Allan Gregg. Its aim, said Decima vice-president Catherine Murray, "was to go much deeper than regular polls on national unity, and to understand the reasons behind polling figures and trends."

Maclean's asked Gregg and Murray to identify scientifically the clusters of thinking in the country that, taken together, constitute a portrait of the main patterns of thought that dominate the nation. Then, by carefully selecting individuals whose views matched the characteristics of each cluster, Murray and her team would create a panel that represented the collective thought patterns of the nation. Said Murray: "We also wanted to get beyond the conventional viewpoints from interest groups and politicians to have Canadians speak for themselves."

The project arose after the collapse a year ago of the Meech Lake constitutional accord, when *Maclean's* began searching for a new, in-depth way to examine the views of representative Canadians. To form a group that would reflect that broad range of opinions, Decima began by looking at its recent political samplings, including the seventh annual *Maclean's*/Decima poll, published in January. It and another survey, which also involved 1,500 Canadians and was released at about the same time, focused on identifying the values, attitudes and beliefs that predominate on the national political scene. Then, Decima checked those responses against results from its monthly polling on national issues over the past year.

After a lengthy analysis of those results, Murray and Ottawa-based Decima consultant Justin Lewis were able to identify what they described as the six most widespread schools of political thought in Canada—three in Quebec, and three in the rest of the country. Murray said that the current gulf in political thinking between Quebec and the rest of the country is so deep that Decima finally decided to treat Canada,

for the purpose of the selection, as "two countries."

With that, Decima staff made more than 400 additional calls across the country to find people whose opinions most clearly reflected the six clusters. Decima and *Maclean's* then selected a shortlist of 35 possible participants from coast to coast, and *Maclean's* editors and reporters re-interviewed them all to determine who were the most articulate in expressing their views. The final choice of 11 was also influenced by the need to balance the various regions of Canada, differing ages, both sexes and the relative prominence of the specific points of view.

There was one exception to that selection process. *Maclean's* editors and Decima agreed that the forum should have a native Canadian participant, but standard telephone polling methods do not produce a representative sam-

pling of the native population. As a result, *Maclean's* mounted its own search for an articulate spokesman for native issues, one with no current affiliation with specific native political organizations. The choice: Yukon Indian film-maker and writer Carol Geddes.

Of the other 11 participants, many occasionally expressed views that set them apart from the clusters that Decima placed them in. And, said Murray, some of the participants may even object to the descriptions that Decima attached to them. Still, she declared with pleasure at the end of the weekend, "they were consistent and articulate representatives of the respective patterns of thought that they were chosen to



Murray: testimony to divisions that scar the country

represent." The positions they took in the discussions confirmed the validity of the process, she added.

Outside Quebec, there are three main clusters of thought, which *Maclean's* and Decima chose to label as Firm Federalists (33 per cent of the adult population), Peacemakers (27 per cent) and Fed-up Federalists (40 per cent). Within Quebec, there are also three main clusters: Quebec Federalists (44 per cent), Hard Separatists (32 per cent) and Moderates (24 per cent).

The main characteristics of each group:

Firm Federalists: People in this category are very proud to call themselves Canadian. They say that there is a shared Canadian identity and that Canada can play a significant role in shaping world events. As well, they say that the federal system has treated them well, and that the interests of their respective provinces are adequately served within the current system. Firm Federalists also say that they are happy with the status quo in federal power sharing, but unhappy with the problems that they see throughout the country. They have not decided if Quebec will separate, and they say that they are uncertain what will happen if it does. They also have not made up their minds about whether all provinces should have equal representation in Ottawa, but generally they say that they favor a slightly stronger federal government. The participants who fit that overall description were Karen Adams, Colin Finn and Richard Miller.

Peacemakers: Canadians who fall under the broad umbrella of Peacemakers say that there is a very strong likelihood that Quebec will separate—and that such an event would produce high economic costs and radical changes in their personal lives. To avoid that, they say that they favor meeting Quebec's demands by shifting more power to all provinces. They also place a high value on consultation, support a national bilingualism policy and are generally receptive to Quebec's claims to special status. Despite their willingness to give more power to the provinces and uphold provincial values, they favor strong national standards for certain economic and social policy issues.

Peacemakers say that it is important to protect the less fortunate in society and, as a result, they place a high value on continued equalization payments to the provinces.

The two participants who fell into this category are Karren Collings and John Prall.

Fed-up Federalists: Like some Quebecers, these Canadians say that their province has been unfairly treated in the federal system, and they claim that they are not well represented in Parliament. But unlike their francophone Quebec counterparts, they say that they believe in a common Canadian identity. They also support a more influential voice for smaller provinces in the federal government. And they favor a more decentralized form of federalism. People in the category may say either that national tensions are a normal condition or that they are unusually high at present.

Although those who lean towards the Fed-up Federalist position—

rather than embracing it wholeheartedly—say that Canadian federalism is already decentralized almost as much as it should be, they also argue for more provincial control in certain areas. Still, in a referendum they would probably vote for the status quo.

The participants who fit the general description of the group were Viola Cerezke-Schooler and Sheila Simpson. Decima determined that Geddes also belonged to that category.

Quebec Federalists: This group is generally more assertive than its counterpart in the rest of the country. Those who fall into the category reject the vision of two linguistic solitudes. They identify strongly with other regions of Canada, and they say that the country is far more than the sum of its parts. Federalists in Quebec differ from Firm Federalists in a critical area: although they favor maintaining the status quo, they would likely favor greater provincial power in a referendum. Within the umbrella group, there is a subgroup whose members are alienated enough within Canada to question the existence of a common Canadian identity. And all members of the larger category say that they have been left out of the current debate and feel powerless to affect it.

The participant who represented the group is Robert Lalande.

Hard Separatists: Members of this cluster are highly pessimistic about finding any single solution to Canada's problems. They favor a sovereign Quebec and they assume that francophones and anglophones have nothing in common. They also reject claims that Canada has a clear national identity. And they say that historical grievances and the unfair treatment of Quebec within Canada justify the province's right to be considered a distinct society.

Hard Separatists in general favor provincial control of virtually all policy fields, in some cases including currency. Most want full independence for Quebec and a common-market arrangement with the rest of Canada.

Charles Dupuis and Marie Le-Beau were the participants who represented this category.

Quebec Moderates: Moderates are prepared to accept the existence of a common Canadian

identity, and reject claims that Canada is a nation of two solitudes. They agree with their Hard Separatist counterparts on some issues, but the Moderates do not insist on any special status for Quebec. Members of this group say that every province should have equal power—regardless of population—in a common-market arrangement. They generally favor continued equalization payments from the federal government to the provinces, a common currency system and the protection of national standards in some social policy fields.

Cyril Alleyne was the participant who reflected this cluster.

Taken together, the participants in the *Maclean's*/Decima group hold views and positions that represent an accurate picture of the nation's thinking, said Murray. Their weekend discussions were an eloquent testimony to the deep divisions that scar the country—and a beacon of hope for the future.



BRIAN WILLER/MACLEANS'S

Gregg: the meetings were a beacon of hope for the future

The Three Referees

Negotiators and conflict experts win peace after a war of words



It was the beginning of the second full day of work on the Canadian conflict and Roger Fisher, 69, the world-renowned negotiation and conflict resolution expert, looked tired, his eyes red-rimmed and his face pale. As colleagues Robert Ricigliano and Stuart Diamond

hovered over a portable computer and printer, putting last-minute touches on a draft document to present to the 12 Canadians selected to discuss the country's future, the lanky, six-foot, four-inch Fisher sat down to a quiet conversation with one of the Quebecers, Marie LeBeau, a Quebec separatist. Fisher nodded sympathetically as LeBeau discussed her feelings of hurt. In a room nearby, Fisher's wife of 42 years, Caroline, watched the proceedings on closed-circuit television. Having accompanied her husband on negotiating forays around the world, she noted his evident concentration. "When he stepped out of the shower this morning, I asked him how he was doing," she recalled later. "He looked at me and said: 'I'm working now.' Well, I knew enough not to say another word."

For Fisher, the intensity of the task at hand was nothing new. His stop in Canada came after an exhausting whirlwind tour of international conflicts, and he acknowledged that he had never faced such a special challenge: mediating sensitive issues in an open forum covered by reporters and recorded by television cameras. His other cases, while handled behind closed doors, have been no less complex. In mid-May, he attended a conference at The Hague to help the three Baltic republics, the Russian republic and the Soviet government with the process of negotiating solutions to their conflict. Then, it was on to Bogota to train government officials on the art of what Fisher terms "principled negotiation"—the search for common interests in place of the sterile exchange of preconceived positions.

Those are only the latest stops in a globe-trotting career that Fisher began after graduation from Harvard law school and a wartime stint in the U.S. army air force. His first glimpse of international negotiation came as assistant to the chief U.S. legal counsel to the 1948 Marshall Plan for the rebuilding of postwar Europe. Three decades later, a casual conversation with Cyrus Vance, then the U.S. secretary of state and a neighbor of the Fishers at their cottage on Martha's Vine-

yard, Mass., led him to contribute advice on negotiating that helped secure the Camp David accord on the Middle East in 1978. As well, he is the principal author of two books on negotiating techniques, 1982's best-selling *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* and a 1988 spin-off on personal relationships, *Getting Together: Building a Relationship that Gets to Yes*.

Fisher, whose toothy grin and frequent laugh punctuate his conversations, says that he was "conceived in Canada," although he was born in Winnetka, Ill. His lawyer father, now 99 years old, still lives in his own home in the Chicago suburb of Highland Park. Fisher himself is the Samuel Williston professor of law at Harvard law school. He currently

teaches negotiation techniques at the Cambridge, Mass., institution. He also is the director of the Harvard Negotiation Project, which conducts research into negotiation techniques, and a co-founder of the related Conflict Management Group, which *Maclean's* engaged to mediate its forum on Canada's future.

Fisher's interest in international affairs emerged early. He majored in the subject at Harvard College, which he entered in 1939. Later, when the United States entered the Second World War in 1941, Fisher learned how devastating the effects of international strife could be. While he survived four years in the army air force, flying weather reconnaissance, he had firsthand experience of the consequences when peaceful negotiations fail. "I lost my college roommate and some of my best friends in that war," he said.

After his involvement in the Marshall Plan, Fisher returned to the United States and practised law in Washington. He worked primarily on public international law, and his clients included governments in Colombia, Denmark, Iran and Pakistan. After six years of international work, Fisher spent two years as an assistant to the solicitor general in the justice department on domestic issues—pleading government cases before the Supreme Court. It was a period that yielded an anecdote that he uses frequently to illustrate people's tendency to reject information that does not fit their own point of view. "I spent a couple of years arguing cases in our Supreme Court," he says. "I sometimes failed to persuade the court that I was on the right side. I never failed to persuade myself."

In Cambridge, Fisher lives a short walk from the home of Harvard president



Fisher: the devastating effects of strife

Derek Bok, in a quiet neighborhood minutes from Harvard Yard. Wife Caroline is a graduate of Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., and attended Union Theological Seminary in New York City. They have two sons—Elliott, a physician in Hanover, N.H., and Peter, a lawyer who works for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York—as well as four grandchildren.

The two negotiators who joined him in conducting the June 7-to-10 *Maclean's* forum, Diamond and Ricigliano, also have impressive credentials. Diamond, 43, was a journalist for 20 years, working for the Long Island, N.Y., newspaper *Newsday* and *The New York Times*, where he won a Pulitzer Prize with several other reporters in 1987 for an investigation into the causes of the space shuttle Challenger crash. In the same year, he left journalism to study law at Harvard—while also acting as vice-president of a Wall Street commodities firm. He met Fisher during his first year at Harvard and joined Conflict Management Group before completing his law degree in 1990. In addition to working with the group, the native of Camden, N.J., is studying towards an MBA at the Wharton Business School in Philadelphia. Single and based in Boston, Diamond travels frequently. His recent Conflict Management Group assignments have taken him to the secessionist Yugoslav republic of Slovenia and to Colombia to advise and train local government officials.

Ricigliano, 28, a native of Lawrenceville, N.J., was one of Fisher's prized students at Harvard (class of 1988). He has been a member of Fisher's conflict management team since January, 1987—11 months after he began his first class with Fisher. In his time with the negotiating team, Ricigliano has trained senior trade officials from Malaysia and Korea, as well as diplomats from developing countries. In his spare time, he enjoys golf, baseball and football, and is writing a comedy screenplay. Also single, he lives in Arlington, Mass.

The consultancy group where they all work emerged from a decision in 1979 that Fisher's groundbreaking ideas about conflict resolution deserved more support than Harvard law school alone was able to provide. To that end, two graduate students joined Fisher in establishing the Harvard Negotiation Project to focus on further research into his "principled negotiating" techniques and other tactics for successful conflict resolution. Twelve years later, with demand for his professional services and those of his younger proteges increasing steadily, Fisher and his associates formed the nonprofit Conflict Management Group to provide services in those areas.

Fisher, Diamond and Ricigliano are as different in character as they are in appearance. Their personalities and the manner in

which they interact is crucial to their method. While Fisher towers physically over the other two and is clearly the dominant personality and leader, he also responds with ease when the more self-effacing and gentle Diamond interrupts with observations. Diamond, says Fisher, "is listening for things that I appear to miss." For his part, Diamond explains: "It's always important when we're doing the program that one person is watching and listening while the other person is talking and interacting. And that's something we always do."

Although all three acknowledge that they have different roles to play in a negotiating workshop, they deny that they are playacting. Said Fisher: "We are being ourselves." A typical example of interaction among the three occurred on Saturday morning at the *Maclean's* forum, when the participants and conflict experts began their first full day together. As Fisher began to sum up what the group had discussed in the first session the previous evening, he zeroed in on the common economic concerns. Diamond interjected: "I think I hear something a bit broader about the lack of awareness of a number of problems." Minutes later,

Ricigliano insisted: "Two things—economic development policies and the system of representation—have got to be an issue." Fisher incorporated those elements in his subsequent summary.

Throughout the weekend, Ricigliano felt free to challenge his former professor when he thought it necessary—a fact that seemed to endear the junior member of the team to the participants. The *Maclean's* participants' response to Fisher was more mixed. One referred to him privately, after a long, intense session, as "a tyrant." Another recognized that "Fisher is steering us some place he wants to go, but I guess he is the more experienced." Yet another participant offered a glowing assessment: "He is a professional who gave us the tools. I would love to learn from these guys again." For his part, Fisher, while sometimes pushing the group hard, maintained a humble demeanor, at one point saying: "I am your servant here. I am just trying to keep the process moving."

While the negotiation experts tried to downplay their personalities and put the issues and methods in the forefront, it became clear on Sunday evening, as Ricigliano left the gathering early to catch a plane for an assignment in Greece, that emotions also play a part in their work. As Ricigliano said farewell to each participant, he received heartfelt hugs. The young veteran of international conflicts and triumphs was wiping tears from his cheek as he left the room. In the background, Fisher, too, had tears in his eyes.



Diamond at morning outdoor session; Ricigliano with visual aid (below): emotions inevitably become a part of the negotiators' work



NANCY WOOD

The Experts' Report

The Harvard conflict resolution team sums up—and finds cause for optimism



A team of conflict resolution experts from the Harvard Negotiation Project and Conflict Management Group of Cambridge, Mass., headed by law professor Roger Fisher, guided 12 Canadians in discussions about the future of the country during the Maclean's forum held at the Briars, north of Toronto, from June 7 to 10. Their report:

In Canada today, as in every other important conflict with which we have dealt, people are reasonably saying "no" to what they hear themselves being asked to do. The Briars participants identified four questions confronting Canadians:

1. Should we agree to independence for Quebec?
2. Should we accept a stronger federal government?
3. Should we accept a weak federal government with strong provinces?
4. Should we agree to self-government for the First Nations?

Today, a majority of Canadians appear opposed to each proposal—and for good reason. None of them has been worked out in practical detail. Each has been advanced unilaterally as a position that meets the wishes of some people. None was designed to meet the interests of most people. Each proposal is advanced as a big decision to be made before working out practical, operational details. But most Canadians are reluctant to head off into a vague unknown. There does not appear to be a sufficiently clear picture of each alternative future.

Canada may have problems, but it has done well—so well that for much of the world, Canada is often a model. Understandably, Canadians still see faults and want to do better. But we wonder whether the right questions have been asked. Are different languages and cultures really the problem? After all, the people of Switzerland do well with four languages. Canada's primary difficulties may lie neither in cultural differences nor substantive problems, but rather in how citizens deal with those differences and problems.

Just as a bitter disagreement between husband and wife about separate bedrooms or where they should live inspires talk of divorce, disputes over language may lead to talk of separation. But neither location nor language is the real issue. A troubled relationship is. And no agreement on a substantive issue will cure that troubled relationship.

We have for some years studied how people successfully deal with their differences—what works and what doesn't. We are not experts in

substantive areas, such as the Canadian Constitution. We focus on the process of conflict management. We don't provide substantive answers. We help people ask better questions, and then try to provide an effective method to answer them. Unfortunately, many people have no interest in process. They say: "I don't care what road I take, as long as I end up where I want to be." But where they end up usually depends on what road they take. The many years of unsuccessful discussion in Canada suggest that the past process is not an effective means for dealing with the nation's problems.

The 12 participants at the Briars found a different road. They found that exploring underlying interests was more effective than arguing over

respective positions. They jointly developed an array of options that might serve the interests of all Canadians. Then, they suggested specific, constructive steps to bring it about. This is the sort of process that we recommend for Canada.

The specific action plan suggested by the participants at the Briars is not really the lesson of the weekend. We—and they—were sure better ideas were out there. The real lesson is that a dozen people, selected for their differences and representation of various major Canadian viewpoints, could work so well together. Over a weekend, using a systematic process of analysis and discussion, they could deal effectively with their differences and agree on a large number of suggested actions. And if a dozen citizens without major resources could do that, we suspect that Canada's leaders, with the help of their constituents and millions of dollars in resources, could do it, too.

But citizens need not wait for their leaders. Individual citizens of Canada, individually as well as collectively, can probably make a far greater difference than they assume. At least two million readers of this magazine are being exposed to those ideas and sugges-

tions. Citizens can plan, in detail, possible futures before choosing one, or abandoning any idea. How *exactly* would a united Canada meet the interests of Quebec? How *exactly* might a separate Quebec handle the interests of native Canadians, currency and trade? Confront the problems, not each other. Be creative. Work with others, using the collective talents, experience and points of view. Talk and listen. Draft and redraft. Make decisions *only* at the end of the process. No province will lose. The best ideas will win.

ROGER FISHER, STUART DIAMOND and ROBERT RICIGLIANO



Diamond (standing), Ricigliano and Fisher: process

PETER BREGG/MACLEANS



Modern portrayal of the Confederation meeting at Quebec City in 1864: a minimal agreement on the division of powers

The Roots Of Conflict

The ghosts of ambiguity and omission haunt Canadian unity



In the beginning, ambiguity was a refuge and a virtue. There were the 36 Fathers of Confederation, largely lawyers and businessmen, struggling to craft a constitution out of the conflicting demands of four provinces and two cultures. Throughout the dismal autumn of

1864, through hours of suspicion-tinged clashes, they carefully narrowed the focus of their talks from the visionary to the pragmatic. In the end, they left much out: they made no reference to two founding nations or equal provinces; they made no emphatic declaration on the strength of the central government; they did not incorporate an amending formula. Instead, they hammered out a minimal agreement on the division of powers and obligations—and on the composition of institutions. That agreement became the British North America (BNA) Act of 1867. Passed by the British Parliament, it outlined the bare structure of a new nation. The Fathers' ambiguous legacy was at once glorious and unnerving. They created Canada—and 124 years of constitutional struggle.

The ambiguities and omissions haunt the history of Canada's efforts to change its Constitution. Without an amending formula, changes to British legislation required the consent of the British Parliament. Without a clear constitutional vision, competing visions coexisted uneasily amid two unanswered—and perhaps unanswerable—questions: Did Canada evolve from two founding nations or four equal provinces? How powerful were those provinces and how strong was the central government? For the first 60 years of Canada's existence, there were no formal constitutional talks—but a constant battle for power between the provinces and Ottawa punctuated the decades.

From 1927 until 1980, there were 10 unsuccessful attempts to bring the Constitution home from Westminster with an amending formula. The first efforts at constitutional reform often dealt with Ottawa's demands for more power. By 1960, the focus had shifted. As the Quiet Revolution revitalized Quebec society, the Quebec government sought more economic and cultural powers, as well as the ability to pay for the exercise of those powers. Other provinces joined the chorus of demands

for greater power. In a dramatic climax, Quebec was the sole province to withhold its consent when Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau engineered an agreement that brought the Constitution home in 1982 with an amending formula and a charter of rights, but without significant additional powers for Quebec.

Nine years later, the same themes that haunted the Fathers are still dividing their heirs. The 1990 failure of the Meech Lake accord, a constitutional package designed to win Quebec's consent to the new Constitution, vividly underlined the unsolved constitutional issues that riddle Canada's history. Canadians, in fact, are arguing about the same issues that the Fathers sidestepped with deft ambiguity. The litany is familiar: Should Quebec be considered a "distinct society" or one of 10 equal provinces? Do Canadians receive better representation through a strong central government or through stronger provincial governments? Should Canada find a better amending formula?

Adding to the controversy is the fact that the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms gave new recognition to long-overlooked voices: Canada's aboriginals, women, multicultural groups. Those voices have added new and often competing claims to the constitutional cacophony. In response, the politicians and academics of 1991—like the representative members of the *Maclean's* forum at the Briars—have no simple constitutional prescriptions. Observed University of Toronto political scientist Richard Simeon: "Not only do we have to deal with the unresolved issues that we inherited from the past, but we also must resolve a host of new issues which generate new constitutional agendas. This immensely complicates the current debate—and the range of possible answers."

The roots of the current debate lie in the conflicting aims of Canada's original constitutional negotiators. Appalled by the ravages of the Civil War in the American federation, Sir John A. Macdonald, who became Canada's first prime minister, concluded that federations in themselves were divisive creations. The solution that he sought was a strong central government. His chief francophone ally, Sir George Etienne Cartier, wanted to honor Canada's "diversity of races" and to preserve Quebec's language and Roman Catholic schools. The BNA Act was their ambiguous compromise.

Ottawa took control of such critical areas as trade and commerce. In addition, the federal government could cancel provincial legislation or declare a provincial undertaking to be under federal jurisdiction because it was "for the general advantage." But there was a catch: Ottawa's blanket control over "peace, order and good government" could be countered by the provinces' almost equally open-ended control over property and civil rights. Still, Macdonald was satisfied: "We thereby strengthen the central Parliament and make Confederation one people and one government." Cartier, too, was pleased: "Under the new system, Lower Canada will have its local government and almost as much legislative power as formerly."

Throughout the next 124 years, the provinces and Ottawa warily circled their ambiguous Constitution, scuffling for power and money on various stages. They sought constitutional interpretations in the courts.

They fought for their share of tax dollars. When Ottawa spent money on provincial affairs, the provinces tried to exclude Ottawa from administration of such programs—while keeping the money.

They faced off in formal constitutional talks. Less than 20 years after Confederation, the provinces found an unlikely champion. To Macdonald's chagrin, Canada's final court of appeal, the British Privy Council, began to limit federal power. In 1883, the council announced that "the local legislature is supreme and has the same authority as the Imperial Parliament or the Parliament of the Dominion would have under like circumstances." In that often rancorous climate, Quebec Premier Honore Mercier, with the support of Ontario Premier Oliver Mowat, hosted five of the then-seven premiers at an interprovincial conference in 1887. Their demands have a familiar ring: abolition of Ottawa's right to disallow provincial legislation; abolition of Ottawa's right to declare that provincial undertakings were in the national interest; the right to nominate half of the Senate's members; increased federal subsidies. Macdonald ignored them.

Nearly 40 years later, Great Britain encouraged Canada's first federal-provincial attempts at major constitutional reform. In 1926, the Balfour Declaration recognized that the dominions were independent countries. In response, a 1927 Canadian federal-provincial conference

launched the search for an amending formula. The premiers were sharply divided. According to the official conference summary, some opponents went so far as to contend "that if Canada had the right of herself to amend her Constitution, all sorts of demands for changes would be made." Four years later, when the British Parliament was about to adopt the principles of the Balfour Declaration in the Statute of Westminster, the premiers and the Prime Minister tried again. They failed. Canada asked Britain to change the statute so that Britain retained the power to amend the Canadian Constitution.

Throughout the next three decades, the constitutional amendment issue was almost forgotten. The times were dramatic: the Depression; the Second World War; the postwar boom. In that climate,

the extraordinary tug of war between Ottawa and the provinces was the stuff of legend, but it was largely waged on the judicial and fiscal fronts. Throughout the 1930s, as the Depression raged, Ottawa "disallowed" Alberta's bid to set monetary policy; the British Privy Council, in turn, ruled that Ottawa's proposed labor standards, its version of the American New Deal, were an intrusion on provincial powers. In wartime, Ottawa consolidated its fiscal strength, taking control over personal and corporate taxes, then transferring a portion of that revenue to the provinces.

In the postwar boom, throughout the late 1940s and the 1950s, Ottawa was a leader in the development of the welfare state, partly through direct programs such as unemployment insurance and partly through the device of shared-cost programs such as health insurance. Many provinces, including Ontario, resisted that intrusion of federal spending power. In the end, Quebec Premier Maurice Duplessis remained the sole dissenter: he refused to participate in several shared-cost programs, among them postsecondary funding. But because



Simeon: a complicated agenda involving both old and new issues

THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT

Duplessis did not set up programs in competition with those of Ottawa, his opposition did not create significant national antagonism.

In 1935, Prime Minister Mackenzie King told the premiers that he would entertain proposals to amend the Constitution to extend Ottawa's authority to regulate wages and working conditions. The provinces largely ignored that offer. Instead, the federal government and eight of the nine existing provinces cobbled together an amending formula. When New Brunswick withheld its consent, the proposal was quietly shelved. In 1950, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent and the premiers tried again to find an amending formula. They, too, failed.

That set the stage for the modern constitutional war. In June, 1960, the Liberals won the Quebec election—and the Quiet Revolution, Quebec's delayed entry into the modern world, was born. Ardently nationalistic, the new government wanted to use the Quebec government to defend francophone rights and interests. It shook off centuries of domination by the Roman Catholic Church and it concluded that the existing division of powers and financial arrangements did not allow Quebecers to become "masters in our own house."



Mulroney and premiers during 1987 talks leading to the Meech Lake accord: citing Quebec as a distinct society

In 1964, at a stormy federal-provincial meeting, Premier Jean Lesage forced Ottawa to accept Quebec's withdrawal from several federal-provincial cost-sharing programs, such as hospital insurance, but to provide critical financial compensation. As a result, Quebec "opted out": Ottawa gave 44 per cent of the personal income tax collected within the province to Quebec, while the other provinces received only 20 per cent. Lesage also won the right to establish a Quebec pension plan.

Meanwhile, constitutional reform remained stalled. In 1960, Ottawa and the provinces drafted the so-called Fulton amending formula, which included provisions for each level of government to delegate power to the other. The ensuing draft bill did not receive unanimous approval, largely because the Quebec government feared that its fellow provinces would delegate power whenever Ottawa suggested new social programs—because Ottawa had the ability to pay for those programs. If Quebec wanted to run its own competing programs, there was no guarantee that it would receive federal funds. As a result, Quebec feared the new amending formula would bring two unpalatable choices: cede power to Ottawa or remain isolated, unable to pay for social benefits for

its citizens that would become available elsewhere—funded by Ottawa.

In 1964, Ottawa and the provinces concocted the Fulton-Favreau amending formula. Two years later, Quebec again withheld its consent, arguing that the formula was inflexible and that it could limit the province's struggle for more power. Observed the University of Toronto's Simeon: "Quebec did not really begin to make constitutional demands until the election of Premier Daniel Johnson in 1966. In part, Johnson's demands were a response to [then-federal Justice Minister] Trudeau's view on the transfer of tax points. Trudeau said that Quebec's emerging special status was a slippery slope to separatism and that there should be no more special treatment for one province. That stand helped to catapult Quebec's demands away from fiscal and policy issues onto a constitutional level."

There were four more unsuccessful attempts to bring home the Constitution between 1967 and 1980. As each attempt failed, and as Ottawa and the provinces waged increasingly bitter struggles over scarce fiscal resources, more provinces, such as Alberta and Newfoundland, supported Quebec's demand for more powers. The pattern was set:

the provinces tugged; Prime Minister Trudeau tugged back. In 1971, after four years of negotiations, Ottawa and the provinces produced a major package to patriate the Constitution with an amending formula and a bill of rights.

A week later, Quebec backed away from the proposal, arguing that there was no constitutional guarantee of financial compensation if the province substituted its own social programs for federal-provincial shared-cost programs. In 1975, Trudeau said that Ottawa and the premiers should concentrate on the quest for an amending formula and several additional guarantees of language rights. The premiers replied that they could not agree on a patriation package that did not involve transfers of federal authority to the provinces.

In the third round, from October, 1978, to February, 1979, there was an agenda of 14 items including resource ownership, communications, a charter of rights, the amending formula and Ottawa's spending power. There was no agreement. There were deep divisions between Ottawa and the provinces, and among the provinces themselves. Fifteen months later, Quebecers rejected independence, or sovereignty-association, by

a 19-point margin. Anxious to launch a campaign for renewed federalism, Trudeau called another federal-provincial conference. When that meeting failed to reach agreement on 12 items including an amending formula, the Prime Minister introduced a parliamentary resolution to bring home the Constitution unilaterally with an amending formula and a charter of rights.

Two provinces—Ontario and New Brunswick—supported him; eight opposed him. On Sept. 28, 1981, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Ottawa had the legal right to patriate the Constitution unilaterally. But it added that unwritten constitutional convention required Ottawa to obtain an unspecified "consensus" among the provinces before it proceeded. Five weeks later, after a dramatic night of constitutional bartering, Ottawa and all provinces except Quebec agreed to patriate the Constitution with a charter of rights and an amending formula. That formula required the consent of Ottawa and seven provinces with at least 50 per cent of the population to change the Constitution. Several key areas, such as changes to the office of the governor general, required unanimous consent. Said a shattered Quebec Premier Rene Levesque: "Quebec finds itself all alone."

Another decade of constitutional fighting began. Legally, the Constitution applied to Quebec. But the province refused to endorse a package that did not meet its political demands. In 1987, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and the 10 premiers signed the Meech Lake accord, which dealt with more than a century of familiar Quebec requests. It recognized Quebec as a "distinct society." It expanded the areas in the amending formula that required unanimity, giving Quebec, in effect, a veto. It guaranteed compensation to provinces that withdrew from federal spending programs in areas of provincial jurisdiction, if the provinces then launched a program that was "compatible with the national objectives." It also established a provincial role in Senate appointments.

That historic accord met Quebec's basic requirements, but it ran into stiff opposition in other parts of Canada. The so-called charter groups argued that the accord did not deal with their constitutional demands. Native people said that they also constituted a distinct society and that the Constitution should enshrine their right to self-government. Other Canadians objected to the very suggestion of a distinct society, claiming that it conferred spe-



Queen Elizabeth II signing 1982 Constitution in Ottawa: new focus

cial status on Quebec when all provinces should be equal. Still others denounced the process used to reach the agreement: the 11 First Ministers had produced a document behind closed doors, which they then refused to change. The accord died in June, 1990, when two provinces—Manitoba and Newfoundland— withheld their consent.

Now, all constitutional provisions, and Canada's constitutional process itself, are up for discussion. Quebec has expanded its demands. The charter groups are compiling their agendas. Across Canada, academics, politicians and Canadians generally, such as those at the *Maclean's* forum, are seeking new solutions to old problems.

The process: Many Canadians now insist that politicians consult the public, formally or informally, before they try to reach another agreement. In response, University of Toronto political scientist Peter Russell, for one, favors the formation of a constituent assembly, composed of delegates from Ottawa and the 10 provinces. Aboriginal peoples—if they wished—could also participate. If the constituent assembly emerged with a package, Ottawa and the provinces could use the current amending formula to adopt it. Still, Russell has stipulated that Quebec, natives and northerners should consent to amendments that affect them. Declared Russell: "We would then truly have constituted ourselves as a people."

The amending formula: The failure of the Meech Lake accord convinced many Canadians, including those in the *Maclean's* forum, that the current amending formula must be changed. There are at least three ways in which to achieve that objective: a veto for Quebec, the extension of veto power to all provinces or the adoption of entirely new procedures for major changes. The Quebec Liberal party espoused the first approach earlier this year when it called for a new formula: seven provinces with at least 50 per cent of the population including Quebec. Some academics say that Quebec's veto could be restricted to changes in national institutions.

The Meech Lake accord would have required unanimity for major amendments, even though many academics claimed that the system would be unworkable. Declared Donald Stevenson, the associate to the principal at Toronto's Glendon College: "Unanimity always gives the last person 'in' the power of blackmail. That was one of the main causes of the failure of Meech Lake." But an architect of the

BNA Act and other historical documents: legacy



current formula, Peter Meekison, a University of Alberta vice-president, countered that the formula was flexible. He pointed out that many Meech Lake provisions did not require unanimity: Ottawa could have proclaimed them. But Meekison said that large amendment packages may require a different formula—perhaps a constitutional referendum.

The distinct society: Quebec insists that any future constitutional arrangement must recognize that it constitutes a "distinct society." That insistence stems from the conviction that Confederation represented a treaty between two founding nations—and that Quebec has the right to preserve and promote its distinctiveness. In contrast, in the so-called Rest of Canada, the phrase often provokes anger: many Canadians contend that equality of the provinces is a fundamental principle of Confederation.

In fact, the ambiguous BNA Act makes no such claim. Provinces have often received different rights and different obligations: New Brunswick and Nova Scotia received more Senate seats than the western provinces; initially, bilingual rights applied only to the legislature of Quebec. Still, as University of Prince Edward Island political scientist David Milne observed, "The Canadian federation has seen a steady and growing movement towards [the equality principle]." Those conflicting views are probably the greatest barrier to agreement on a constitutional package.

Division of powers: The Quebec Liberal party now demands that Quebec receive exclusive authority over 22 areas of jurisdiction, including culture, manpower, language, communications and regional development. In response, suggestions have varied dramatically: centralize, decentralize, "rebalance," special powers for Quebec. At the root of the problem is the fact that Canadians are probably unwilling to establish special status for Quebec; they are probably equally unwilling to accept massive decentralization to all provinces. Some academics, such as University of Western Ontario political scientist Robert Young, have suggested that Ottawa transfer jurisdiction over language, culture and communications to the provinces. That might ease Quebec's concerns about the preservation of its language and culture. Other academics, including University of Toronto law professor Michael Trebilcock, have called for a "rebalancing" of Confederation in which social, language and cultural policies would be decentralized to the provinces while economic powers would be centralized.

Prince Edward Island's Milne had one of the more innovative recommendations: give concurrent jurisdiction in many fields to both Ottawa and the provinces to ensure that each province has equal powers. Provincial laws would have precedence in those fields over federal laws. Some provinces, said Milne, would likely choose to ignore their new powers, while others would use them to legislate according to their own needs, effectively shutting out Ottawa. But all provinces would remain theoretically equal. (Canada now has only three areas of concurrent jurisdiction: agriculture, immigration and pensions.)

National institutions: The *Maclean's* forum called for an elected Senate to ensure better representation for the regions within the federal government. That approach echoes the western provinces' call for a Triple E Senate: an effective, elected body with equal representation from each province. In contrast, the Quebec Liberal party has called for the abolition of the Senate. The Senate debate is heated because the West appears to be on a collision course with Quebec. Quebec would have only 10 per cent of the seats in a Triple E Senate—even though it has 25 per cent of the population. As a compromise, some analysts say that Quebec senators could exercise a veto over federal legislation on education or culture, and matters affecting the French language.

Spending powers: Spending is a central issue in the current debate. Provincial leaders fear that Ottawa will surrender constitutional control over programs but keep the revenue that funded those programs. The Quebec Liberal party has demanded the abolition of Ottawa's right to spend in areas of Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction. In an impressive response, 22 Canadians, including former Ontario premier William Davis and former Saskatchewan premier Allan Blakeney, recommended that Ottawa and the provinces "be restricted to spending in their own fields of jurisdiction unless by mutual agreement." The group added that Ottawa should transfer to the provinces the tax revenues that it now devotes to social programs.

The charter of rights: At the core of the debate is a fundamental disagreement over the proper balance between individual and collective rights. Individual rights were entrenched in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The result: charter groups, such as women and natives, now have a fervent interest in upholding their individual rights. In contrast, Quebec society has a historical attachment to its collective rights. The original BNA Act and the charter itself, in fact, recognize collective rights.

The two views clashed in 1988—when Quebec Premier Robert



Ottawa crowd celebrates new charter, April 17, 1982: power

Bourassa invoked the so-called notwithstanding clause to restrict the individual right to freedom of expression so that he could limit the use of English on commercial signs. To many Quebecers, Bourassa was simply protecting collective rights. To many charter groups, he was violating individual rights. As well, the premier has insisted that the charter cannot take precedence over a future distinct society clause.

Those issues haunt Canada's past, its present and its future. Since the proclamation of the British North America Act, they have underscored the struggle for power and money at the constitutional bargaining table, in the courts and during the division of the taxation revenues. Canadians may not solve those problems during the upcoming round of constitutional talks. The demands are numerous and conflicting; the divisions are deep. Still, as Canadians wrestle, once again, with familiar themes, they do it in the knowledge that 124 years of constitutional bickering did not prevent 124 years of often prosperous and sometimes proud nationhood.

MARY JANIGAN



Common sense to the rescue

BY PETER C. NEWMAN

This special issue of *Maclean's* proves that given the opportunity to consider the alternatives, most Canadians are ready to give the country another chance—not as some valedictorian's vague utopia, but as a congregation of people who can enjoy a decent life together.

That's an epic breakthrough, considering the lassitude most Canadians seem to feel about national unity. Saving this country is turning out to be a growth industry for underemployed academics and little else.

According to a recent Environics poll, the proportion of Canadians who identify with their country (rather than with their region or province) has dropped to 49 per cent from 62 per cent in the past decade. At the same time, an Angus Reid Group survey shows that 80 per cent of Canadians believe that the country is about to split up. Yet in a study by Prof. Reginald Bibby of the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canadians ranked national survival only 11th out of 19 "very serious issues" facing the country. And a May poll by Corporate Research Associates of Halifax reveals that only five per cent of Atlantic Canadians—who would be the most affected by a Quebec split—consider national unity the country's most pressing priority.

We're a strange people.

Nearly every time freedom is threatened anywhere on the globe, we rush in as peacekeepers. Five times this century, we've mobilized highly effective forces to save embattled regimes as far away as Korea and Kuwait. Yet when the continued existence of Canada is threatened—as it now surely is—we stand back, yawn and wonder, "What else is new?"

This unwillingness to get excited about our own future is rooted in Canadian history. Becoming a Canadian never required conversion to any burning faith; we have no equivalent of the American dream. The country simmered up slowly, based on individual allegiance, however reluctantly given, rather than some grand social compact.

Considering the alternatives, most Canadians are ready to give the country another chance

The best of our historical figures have always taken their time, moving as slowly as the seasons, testing the waters—then testing them again—before deciding to wet a toe. We celebrate Canada's birthday on July 1, as if the country had emerged fully formed on that long-ago day in 1867. In fact, only four provinces got to the party in time. It took another 38 years for the others to enter—all except Newfoundland, of course, which waited almost another half-century. Just to be sure.

Procrastination is our state religion; prostration, our national posture. No other country in recorded history took 98 years to decide on its flag, or 100 years to formally sanction the words of its national anthem.

It's that national characteristic of waiting for things to happen, rather than bringing them about, that makes the current situation so dangerous. Quebec's proposed referendum on its future is due to be held in October, 1992. Using that province's 1980 referendum on sovereignty-association as a precedent, it takes about five months for these exercises in plebiscitary democracy to gear up. That means any negotiations with Quebec would have to end by May, 1992, or only two months from the March, 1992, deadline Brian Mulroney has set

for his newest constitutional committee to report its findings on which the federal position will be mainly based.

It doesn't wash.

Trying to reinvent Canada in that brief interval of 60 days would be like trying to scale Mount Everest on a dinner date. It can't be done. Timing has become the central problem. The Meech Lake fiasco proved that the pressure of a self-imposed deadline is counterproductive. As pollster Reid puts it, "The millions of average Canadians who initially watched the Meech Lake story with the disinterest of window-shoppers were transformed into an ugly mob ready to torch the store."

The politicians are not only repeating the mistake of setting a deadline they can't meet, they're also telling us—just as they did in June, 1990—that if the newest constitutional arrangement isn't approved, the country will disappear, split up, be kaput, done for. This time, it could be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The moods of French and English Canada are not only drifting apart, but toughening. Pollsters indicate that there is almost no support in the rest of Canada for Quebec's preferred option of sovereignty-association. Most English-Canadians refuse to consider the prospect of negotiating an economic union with Quebec as an independent state and laugh at a Quebec Liberal party report's suggestion that the province should continue receiving federal equalization payments after separation.

Ironically, nationalist constitutional experts testifying before Quebec's Bélanger-Campeau commission acknowledged that the Canadian Constitution has no provision for allowing a province to withdraw from Confederation. José Woehrling, a law professor at the University of Montreal who testified before the committee, suggested that it would be a lot easier under the Constitution to pass an amendment allowing Quebec to depart than trying to alter the rules in a way that would allow the province to stay.

That's a highly dubious proposition because no federal political leader, nor any premier, would want to be remembered as having presided over the death of the country. Even if they haven't learned anything about avoiding deadlines, our politicians cannot avoid involving people, rather than only themselves, in devising a formula for national salvation. A new constitution, no matter how cleverly worded, that lacks direct public support is doomed. Yet any referendum held by Ottawa to approve its constitutional initiative is bound to be interpreted as a popularity poll on Brian Mulroney's administration. Unless he can engineer a dramatic recovery, that could doom us right there.

Few of the Canadians who participated in the *Maclean's* weekend on the country's future share common cause. That's why they were picked: to reflect accurately the current fragmentation of the country and the confused future we face. But even if they share no sustaining faith, they do share an attitude.

They know that because of all the disappointments and shattered illusions, it may be absurd to advocate innovation and reform of the Canadian state. But they also believe that it would be far more absurd not even to try.