

# 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.

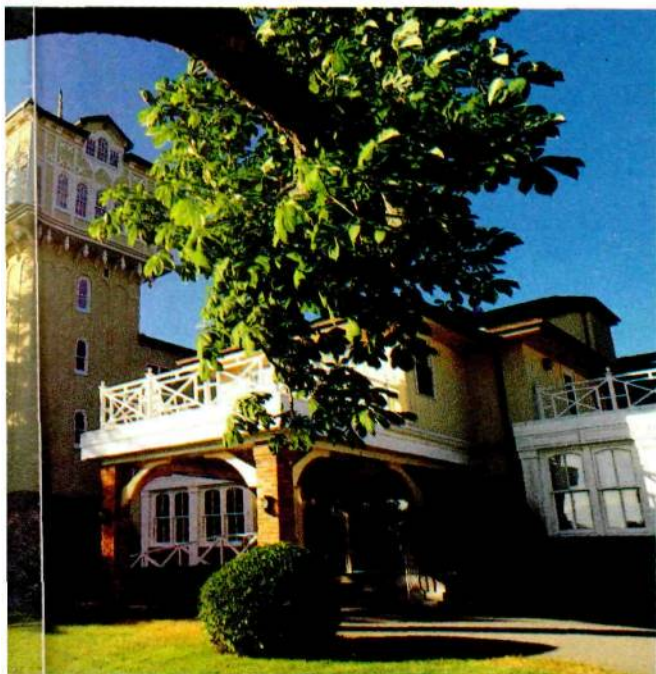
**ROBERT RICIGLIANO (CMG):** This reminds me of one of those old dark horror movies that you see on Saturday afternoon where there is a castle that has a perennial thunderstorm and there are 12 people mysteriously invited to some event and they spend two hours figuring out why they were invited.

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.

Patently, 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,  
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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