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## UNITY/DIVERSITY: THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

What Europe has failed to do in a thousand years, Canada must attempt; namely, to discover some *modus vivendi* by which peoples diverse in race, in language, in religion, and in social customs can develop a common national life.<sup>1</sup>

In 1975 Canadians can look forward to another phase of the debate over immigration policy, and everything that subject implies about the Canadian identity. We can expect much talk about cultural unity, duality, and diversity. There has already been at least one call on the publicly-owned, national television network for restriction, if not exclusion, of non-white immigration;<sup>2</sup> and we can prepare for more, from both French and English Canadians. It might, therefore, be useful to review the Canadian experience to see whether there are discernible trends or significant generalizations that might serve as cautionary tales or inspiring examples for us in our renewed fixation with the national navel.

### I

While everyone conceded in the 1860's that the object of the Fathers of Confederation was to produce the bases of one political entity, no one anticipated that this task would be performed by imposing uniformity on the diverse peoples and regions of British North America. Indeed, had such a goal been sought, it would have proved impossible of attainment. The various colonies, with their unique historical development, their different religious denominations, and their distinct nationalities, could not have been homogenized culturally as they were joined politically. The peculiarities of language, creed, and regional

identity had to be maintained, for several good and compelling reasons.

Diversity was both desirable and unavoidable, first, because the existing differences were simply too strong to be dismissed. This was true not just in the case of the French Canadians, but even with the local autonomists of Ontario, the Grits, and, most especially, in the Maritimes. The *Acadian Recorder* lamented: " 'We don't know each other. We have no trade with each other. We have no facilities or resources or incentives to mingle with each other. We are shut off from each other by a wilderness, geographically, commercially, politically and socially. We always cross the United States to shake hands.' " Joseph Howe, as usual, put it more pungently: " 'Take a Nova Scotian to Ottawa, away above tidewater, freeze him up for five months, where he cannot view the Atlantic, smell salt water, or see the sail of a ship, and the man will pine and die.' " <sup>3</sup> Diversity was a force too powerful to be exorcised.

Even were it possible to assimilate all British North Americans, to what would you assimilate them? Unlike the United States, a community created by revolution and compact, the proposed Canada was to be produced as the result of an evolutionary process by an act of an external authority, the United Kingdom. Rather than a society of revolution and consensus, Canada was to be a community of evolution and allegiance. The society of allegiance did not require conformity to any one model; the Canadians had no object of assimilation.<sup>4</sup> If they copied anything at all, it was the British pattern, which, since the days of imperial expansion and Catholic Emancipation, meant not something monolithic, Protestant, and Anglo-Saxon, but a number of things more diversified. Canadians could not, at Quebec and Charlottetown, have sought unity at the expense of diversity because there was nothing to which they could conform, and no imperative of revolution to force them to make such a compact.

Finally, Canadian unity was not purchased at the price of homogenization because the colonial politicians who produced it had no intention of creating problems for themselves by debating something as abstract and theoretical as the cultural basis of the new state. These were practical politicians with painfully real problems. Their attention was devoted to solving the difficulties created by deadlock, acquisition of the Northwest, inadequate defences, and promotion of intercolonial commerce, not to searching for new ones. They were, as Donald

Creighton has observed, "as far away from the dogmas of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment as they were from twentieth-century obsession with race, and with racial and cultural separatism." These men "saw no merit in setting out on a highly unreal voyage of discovery for first principles."<sup>5</sup> In short, the delegates at Quebec were not about to open a new can of worms by debating the place of various cultural and religious groups in Canada. Such a discussion was as undesirable as it was unnecessary.

These were the reasons why the British North American colonies, as Arthur Lower pointed out, "were carpentered together, not smelted."<sup>6</sup> Or, as G.F.G. Stanley observed: "The Canadian Confederation came into being not to crush but to reconcile regional diversities. . . . Union, not unity, was the result."<sup>7</sup> As one might expect, it was the French-Canadian leader, George-Etienne Cartier who expressed the idea of unity of diversity most clearly:

In our own Federation we should have Catholic and Protestant, English, French, Irish and Scotch, and each by his efforts and his success would increase the prosperity and glory of the new Confederacy. . . . They were placed like great families beside each other, and their contact produced a healthy spirit of emulation. It was a benefit rather than otherwise that we had a diversity of races. . . .

Now, when we were united together, . . . we would form a political nationality with which neither the national origin, nor the religion of any individual, would interfere. It was lamented by some that we had this diversity of races, and hopes were expressed that this distinctive feature would cease. The idea of unity of races was utopian — it was impossible. Distinctions of this kind would always exist. Dissimilarity, in fact, appeared to be the order of the physical world and of the moral world, as well as of the political world.<sup>8</sup>

The key words were "a political nationality": the unity that Confederation was to produce was union at the political level, not cultural. While "carpentering" political unity, British North Americans would retain regional, religious, and cultural diversity; Canada was founded on unity in diversity. And, in passing, one might note the type of diversity intended — "Catholic and Protestant, English, French, Irish and Scotch". This was a very Britannic mosaic.

## II.

Of course, the formula "Unity in diversity" raised as many questions

as it answered. What did the concept mean? How did you hold a diverse country together? Specifically, what were the rights and privileges of the most distinctive minority, the French Canadians? More specifically still, what was to become of the principle of cultural and political *duality* that had evolved in the Province of Canada (the future Ontario and Quebec) between 1841 and 1867? It would take a decade and more to work out the first set of answers to these riddles; and, then, the first essay at a resolution of them would come under attack and be modified substantially.

The first question dealt with was the fate of the duality of the Canadian union. Here the answer was starkly simple: duality would be eliminated. This did not mean any tampering with the official status of the French language that was protected by Section 133 of the British North America Act in the courts and Parliament of Canada, as well as in the courts and Legislature of Quebec. However, in succeeding years it was evident that Canadians were not prepared to foster the expansion of this limited, pragmatic recognition of French into a great principle of *duality* throughout the land. Although French was officially countenanced in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, under special and pressing circumstances, it was not enshrined in the other new provinces of British Columbia and Prince Edward Island. Indeed, in New Brunswick, the Acadian minority suffered the loss of an important cultural bulwark in the 1870's, when their Legislature deprived them of public support for their denominational schools. In short, the first generation of Canadian politicians was prepared to grant French culture official status where temporary exigencies and local pressures made it politically expedient to do so, and nowhere else. They certainly were not about to erect linguistic duality into a great principle of the federation.

Moreover, other aspects of dualism, the double political and administrative institutions that had developed in the United Province, were deliberately removed. Governor General Monck's invitation to John A. Macdonald to form the first Dominion Cabinet explicitly forbade the continuation of the dual premiership. Sectional equality in the Cabinet was replaced by a careful balancing of regional, economic, religious, and cultural interests in Macdonald's first ministry, and in almost all that have succeeded. Duality of administrative posts was also abolished, essentially because the unsatisfactory quasi-federalism of the

Union was replaced by a real federation and division of powers between levels of government. There were, for example, no longer two Superintendents of Education because the schools were now the responsibility of the provinces. Similarly, two Attorneys-General were not needed because French Canada's peculiar civil law was to be controlled by Quebec. And so it went. Institutional duality, whether at the political or civil service level, was eradicated because it was unnecessary and unwanted.

Whatever else the first decade demonstrated, it proved that unity in diversity did not mean the retention of any more duality than was essential. There still remained the more difficult question: if unity in diversity did not mean duality, what did it mean? How was it to be formalized, embodied, made concrete? How did you tack together "a political nationality" out of diverse elements?

The first indication of the means that would be used to hold the country together came in 1868, in Minister of Justice Macdonald's memorandum on the federal power of disallowance. Macdonald laid down guidelines for the federal veto of provincial legislation that were sweeping. They were so general as almost to be unqualified, as was suggested by the provision that provincial statutes "as affecting the interests of the Dominion generally" could be struck down if Ottawa wished.<sup>9</sup> This was Macdonald's instinctive reversion to the eighteenth-century Tory tradition of centralized governmental power. Under his leadership, the first government after Confederation followed a highly centralist policy, one suspects because he regarded such centralization as being as essential to the well-being of the fragile union as it was congenial to his Conservative temperament.

Gradually during the 1870's the rest of the apparatus for ensuring the unity of the state was put into place. The policy of pushing the Indians out of the arable lands of the prairie West and replacing them with white, agricultural settlers was once such project. The gargantuan task of binding the newly-acquired and sparsely-populated West to the rest of the country with a transcontinental railroad was another. And the policy of forcing economic diversification and regional specialisation of economic function through the imposition of the protective tariff was the final means chosen to produce enduring unity out of diversity and distance. The objective of these national policies of expansion and development was to provide an economic *raison d'être*

for the political state; or, if you prefer, it was the means of putting the flesh of economic self-interest on the bare bones of the constitutional skeleton. The West, once filled, would produce agricultural products for export and would serve as a captive market for Canadian manufacturers. Central Canada would manufacture goods, protected and encouraged by the tariff; would fuel her industries with Nova Scotian coal; and would sell her products to Maritimers and Westerners alike. The whole scheme would be facilitated by the network of railways that was so essential to the Canadian federation: the Grand Trunk, Intercolonial, and Canadian Pacific. And, finally, the scheme of economic nationalism — the encouragement of a transcontinental economy of diverse, but integrated economic regions — would be supervised and protected by a powerful central government.

Now, the formulation of these policies was undoubtedly much more accidental than the foregoing sketch suggests. The steps toward adoption of the various pieces were often hesitant, taken out of a sense of constitutional obligation (the promise of a railway to B.C.), and motivated more by partisan political calculations than nation-building ambitions. And, yet, what seems striking is the fact that the pieces fit, that they made up a coherent, compelling, and politically appealing programme of national self-defence through economic expansion and integration. Furthermore, when the pieces are put together, they provide an answer to the question of how unity could be maintained amidst diversity. The answer was that diverse regions, religious groups and nationalities could stay united politically while remaining different culturally because they had a programme of economic development from which they could all benefit. And, moreover, these policies meant that the focus of political life at the federal level would not be on sensitive issues of religion and nationality, but on economic issues that cut across regional, religious, and cultural lines. Macdonald's nationalism would make unity in diversity possible by concentrating on those things that united Canadians, or, at least, did not divide them according to religion and language. The recipe was: diversity locally, but political unity in pursuit of common economic objectives.

Not the least significant feature of this concoction is the fact that, to a large extent, it succeeded. The French Canadians participated in the scheme as enthusiastically as anyone else. There were no more fervent protectionists than Quebec's leaders, who saw the industrialization of

the Townships as the alternative to the continuing hemorrhage of French-Canadian youth to the detested United States. Ontario was satisfied, for the key to Macdonald's scheme was the realisation of Ontario's traditional dream of opening and developing the West in Ontario's image and for Toronto's pecuniary benefit. The national policies embodied Ontario imperialism. And the Maritimes benefited too, although the advantages were offset by the general deterioration of the Atlantic economy in the waning years of wind and wood transportation. There was substantial growth in the Nova Scotian coal industry, as the industrialization encouraged by the tariff created markets for the fuel in urban Quebec.<sup>10</sup> The only region that did not benefit very much from the scheme was the West. There the response to centralization and the national policies was protest: formation of the Manitoba and Northwest Farmers' Union, Riel's second Rebellion, the provincial autonomy campaign in Manitoba, and the steady intonation on the litany of grievances (freight rates, elevators, and tariffs) that was to become so familiar. But, frankly, no one worried much about western complaints, for colonies were only supposed to produce wealth, not be happy. Western grievances aside, however, the Tory scheme of unity through economic expansion was quite successful.

### III

This unity based on pursuit of common economic goals under the direction of a strong central government began to erode in the 1880's as the result of three corrosive influences. Political opportunism inspired an attack on centralization by the Liberal parties at the federal and provincial levels. The economic stagnation that returned after 1883 destroyed the rosy dreams of prosperity and unity. As is normally the case in difficult times, economic discontent led to internal bickering: the provinces *versus* Ottawa; and Ontario against the rest, especially Quebec, when the provinces succeeded in extorting "better terms" from the Conservative federal government. Finally, the desired unity within the country was eroded by the influence in Canada of radically new theories of national unity that focused upon language and culture, rather than economic cooperation, as essential criteria for unification.

The new theories which sought unity at the expense of cultural diversity were represented in the 1880's and 1890's by such men as



D'Alton McCarthy and Goldwin Smith. McCarthy, an Anglo-Saxon supremacist, imperialist, and tariff reformer, was worried about the lack of cohesion in Canada and anxious about the declining power of the central government. To him villain of the piece seemed to be the French Canadian who insisted on having his own way, thereby preventing fusion:

My own conviction is that it is not religion which is at the bottom of the matter but that it is a race feeling. There is no feeling so strong — no feeling which all history proves so strong — as the feeling of race. Don't we find the French today in the province of Quebec more French than when they were conquered by Wolfe upon the plains of Abraham? Do they mix with us, assimilate with us, intermarry with us? Do they read our literature or learn our laws? No, everything with them is conducted on a French model; and while we may admire members of that race as individuals, yet as members of the body politic I say that they are the great danger to the Confederacy.<sup>11</sup>

In McCarthy's view, "It was the language of a people that moulded its nationality."<sup>12</sup> The "science of language" demonstrated "that there is no factor equal to language to band people together, and . . . as is demonstrated in our own case, that nothing is more calculated to keep people asunder."<sup>13</sup> If McCarthy's analysis was correct, then it followed that Canadian unity could be achieved only through the imposition on Canada of one language: unity was to be achieved, not through diversity, but through cultural uniformity brought about by assimilation. His programme for national unity was summarized in his resolution calling for the abolition of the official use of French in the Northwest Territories: that it was " 'expedient in the interest of national unity that there should be community of language among the people of Canada.' "<sup>14</sup>

Goldwin Smith, free trader, continentalist, and Anglo-Saxon racist, advocated a slightly different programme to achieve the same end. He believed that French Canada was an obstacle to unity not just because of its language, but also because of its obscurantism and economic backwardness, both of which were the results of clerical domination:

Quebec is a theocracy. While Rome has been losing her hold on Old France and on all the European nations, she has retained, nay tightened, it here. The people are the sheep of the priest. He is their political as well as their spiritual chief and nominates the politician, who serves the interest of the Church at Quebec or at Ottawa. . . . Not only have the clergy been the spiritual guides and masters of the French Canadians, they have been the preservers and



champions of his nationality, and they have thus combined the influence of the tribune with that of the priest.<sup>15</sup>

The French province, the people of which live on the produce of their own farms and clothe themselves with the produce of their spinning, is uncommercial, and lies a non-conductor between the more commercial members of the Confederation.<sup>16</sup>

Unlike McCarthy, Smith did not seek a solution to this problem in Canada, because he believed the political parties were totally and irrevocably the tools of the Quebec clergy. To Smith it was "perfectly clear that the forces of Canada alone are not sufficient to assimilate the French element or even to prevent the indefinite consolidation and growth of a French nation."<sup>17</sup> The answer, then, was obvious: "French Canada may be ultimately absorbed in the English-speaking population of a vast Continent; amalgamate with British Canada so as to form a united nation it apparently never can."<sup>18</sup> Canada should join the Americans to form an Anglo-Saxon republic of North America in which the French Canadians would drown.

There is a two-fold significance in the emergence of such advocates of Anglo-Saxon cultural uniformity as McCarthy and Smith. The first is that they are evidence that in English Canada, for a variety of reasons, many people had by the 1890's rejected the pursuit of unity in diversity. The second is that the country as a whole rejected the extreme prescriptions put forward by continentalists and cultural assimilationists alike for coercive uniformity. Parliament's response to McCarthy's call for linguistic uniformity was a compromise resolution that said that nothing had happened since Confederation to justify taking from the French Canadians the guarantees they received at the time of union, while allowing the populace of the Northwest Territories itself to decide the fate of the official use of French on the prairies.<sup>19</sup> And in the 1890's such annexationist schemes as Smith's Continental Union Association were rejected by the electorate.

Though McCarthy and Smith failed, they were not without lingering influence. French Canadians, seeing assimilationist movements such as the Equal Rights Association, Equal Rights League, Protestant Protective Association, and Continental Union Association, found renewed cause for anxiety about their future as a distinct cultural entity within the Canadian "political nationality". This disquiet was aggravated by a

new phenomenon of the late 1890's and early 1900's, massive European immigration to the Canadian West. As French-Canadian leaders quickly perceived, this demographic change made Cartier's doctrine of diversity a source of danger.

#### IV.

The problem arose because of English-Canadian reaction to the immigration of the Laurier period. As thousands of Poles, Russians, Germans, Italians, Scandinavians, and Ukrainians flooded the West, middle-class, Anglo-Saxon Canadians began to join working-class critics of extensive immigration. Whereas the old trade union criticism of immigration was essentially economic in character,<sup>20</sup> the new critique was fundamentally concerned with the cultural effects of immigration. Stephen Leacock observed disapprovingly that the new immigration was "from the Slavonic and Mediterranean peoples of a lower industrial and moral status", and consisted of "herds of the proletariat of Europe, the lowest class of industrial society".<sup>21</sup> Principal Sparling of Wesley College, Winnipeg, warned that Canadians "must see to it that the civilization and ideals of Southeastern Europe are not transplanted to and perpetuated on our virgin soil".<sup>22</sup> While Ralph Connor fictionalized Sparling's injunction in *The Foreigner*,<sup>23</sup> a poet, of sorts, expressed similar ideas in verse:

They are haggard, huddled, homeless, frightened at — they know not what:  
With a few unique exceptions they're a disappointing lot;  
But I take 'em as I get 'em, soldier, sailor, saint and clown  
And I turn 'em out Canadians — all but the yellow and brown.<sup>24</sup>

In the era of the Laurier Boom many Canadians recoiled from the tidal wave of immigration, sorrowfully concluding that they could not "make a nation by holding a basket at the hopper of an immigration chute."<sup>25</sup>

The English-Canadian answer to these cultural dangers was a drive to assimilate the "foreigner" by inculcating in him the values of British-Canadian civilization. What precisely that meant, and the danger it portended, manifested itself in the prescriptions critics of immigration put forward for the solution of the problem. "One of the best ways of Canadianizing, nationalizing, and turning all into intelligent

citizens," said one Protestant clergyman in 1913, "is by means of a good English education. . . ." <sup>26</sup> When J.S. Woodsworth asked himself how "are we to break down the walls which separate these foreigners from us?", his conclusion was that first and foremost was "the Public School. Too great emphasis cannot be placed upon the work that has been accomplished and may — yes, must — be accomplished by our National Schools." <sup>27</sup> Linguistic uniformity imposed by the schools was the answer:

If Canada is to become in any real sense a nation, if our people are to become one people, we must have one language. . . . Hence the necessity of national schools where the teaching of English — our national language — is compulsory.

The public school system was "the most important factor in transforming the foreigners into Canadians." <sup>28</sup>

French Canada, not unnaturally, took alarm at such programmes, which drew no distinction between the worthy French Canadian and the despised "Galician". The emerging champion of French-Canadian nationalism, Henri Bourassa, protested that the Fathers of Confederation had never intended "to change a providential condition of our partly French and partly English country to make it a land of refuge for the scum of all nations." <sup>29</sup> Bourassa's complaint was that diversity, by which Canadians had meant a mixture of English French, and Scot, now seemed to mean Ukrainian, German and Italian; and that English Canadians, in reacting to this new form of diversity, attacked French-Canadian rights as well as the pretensions of the European "scum". Bourassa knew whereof he spoke, for, in the early years of the twentieth century, Woodsworth's prescription (and Bourassa's nightmare) was realized. In 1901 and 1905 on the prairies, and in 1912 in Ontario, unilingual education was imposed in an effort to assimilate all minorities, including the French Canadians. In the era of massive European immigration Cartier's "multicultural argument could only accelerate, not retard the unilingual process." <sup>30</sup>

Bourassa's, and French Canada's, response to this danger was to work out a new theory of Canadian unity that protected rather than jeopardized French-Canadian cultural rights. The new spokesman of French Canada found his justification of his culture in Providence and History. God, he argued, had placed the Latin culture of French Canada in North America as a spiritual beacon in the materialistic, Anglo-Saxon

darkness. And what God planted, not even the Canadian Parliament ought to root out. Furthermore, he insisted, Canadian history was the record of the preservation of cultural duality. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 and Quebec Act of 1774 had ensured the survival of the primary agency of French Canada, the Roman Catholic Church. A political process stretching from the Constitutional Act of 1791 to the struggle over responsible government of the 1840's had expanded the limited eighteenth-century guarantees into semi-official recognition of duality. Confederation, in Bourassa's historical recitation, became the adoption by the new Dominion of Canada of biculturalism and bilingualism. Hence, French Canada should be respected because it was a co-ordinate partner with a special providential mission to perform. Not even the infringements of the Confederation compact in the West and Ontario between 1890 and 1912 could alter that fact. "The Canadian nation", Bourassa argued, "will attain its ultimate destiny, indeed it will exist, only on the condition of being biethnic and bilingual, and by remaining faithful to the concept of the Fathers of Confederation: the free and voluntary association of two peoples, enjoying equal rights in all matters."<sup>31</sup> In other words, in flight from the vulnerability of diversity, Bourassa had erected duality as a new line of defence. Bourassa and biculturalism had replaced Cartier and diversity as the theoretical justification of French Canada's right to exist.

In the first half-century of Confederation, then, Canadians' concept of their political community as a unity in diversity had come under attack on two fronts. English assimilationists had argued for cultural homogenization as an answer to disunity, and French-Canadian nationalists had responded with a messianic and historical defence of cultural duality. The two conflicting viewpoints were the subject of much public discussion in the early years of the twentieth century, as each struggled for mastery. As it turned out, with the coming of the Great War the English-Canadian assimilationist model triumphed. Several provinces terminated the official use of French; Ontario refused to soften the assimilationist thrust of its 1912 policy; and Quebec, as a result of the language issue and the conscription crisis, was politically isolated and alienated.

## V.

Although it appeared in 1918 that the country was headed for a

bitter disruption over the question of its cultural composition, the next forty years brought less argument over whether the Dominion's unity was predicated on uniformity, duality, or diversity than any other period of post-Confederation history. The reasons for this apparently inexplicable hiatus are three. First, English-Canadian assimilationists had triumphed; there were few institutions of 'foreign' culture left to dismantle. No one seriously proposed an assault on the only fortress of French-Canadian culture, the province of Quebec. Consequently, advocates of uniformity concentrated their efforts on the children of pre-War immigrants, using the schools to inculcate "Canadianism". Evidence that this was the channel assimilation took is found, among other places, in British Columbia, where in 1920 a history text book was banned, allegedly because, in addition to purveying Prussian values, it was too sympathetic to Catholics in general and French Canadians in particular.<sup>32</sup> Another case study might be Saskatchewan, where some of J.T.M. Anderson's theories on *The Education of New Canadians* were implemented in the interwar period.<sup>33</sup> In Manitoba in the early 1920's school children were learning "to spell by writing 'the foreigner is very often addicted to alcohol' " in classrooms supervised by teachers whose "training consisted of something akin to total immersion in Anglo-Saxonism."<sup>34</sup> And in Northern Ontario the "schools on wheels" had been set rolling to root out Bolshevism and French-Canadian culture in the 1920's.<sup>35</sup>

In the second place, debate on the nature of Canadian unity was muted after 1918 because there were plenty of other pressing issues to distract Canadians. The problems of reconstruction and the pursuit of prosperity dominated the 1920's, while the social and economic problems brought out by the Great Crash and Depression occupied centre stage during the 1930's. And the great crusade of the war against totalitarianism, whether fascist or communist, provided a common cause for Canadians of different languages and religions through the 1940's and 1950's.

Finally, issues of culture and creed were relatively absent from public debate during this period because the era was dominated by Mackenzie King and his politics of conciliation and evasion. Under King and his immediate successors Quebec was domesticated by being given its own "lieutenant" and then conveniently forgotten. King laid down a fog of evasion and fabrication that totally smothered divisive issues. As F.R. Scott has so brilliantly put it,

He seemed to be in the centre  
 Because we had no centre,  
 No vision  
 To pierce the smokescreen of his politics.<sup>36</sup>

Under King, Canadians were diverted by make-believe constitutional crises and a great nationalist crusade to free Canada from the slaving dragon of British imperialism.

Though few realized it at the time, behind the grey mist of these years, French Canada's resentments and frustrations continued to simmer. In fact, fuelled by economic grievances that came in the van of a new wave of industrialization, French-Canadian nationalist anger grew. To cultural anxiety was added the class discontent that resulted from the unequal division of the benefits of modernization between English entrepreneurs and employers on the one hand, and French-Canadian employees on the other. Nor did the debate about the nature of Canada die out in Quebec at this time. The argument, however, was no longer between proponents of diversity and advocates of duality, but between dualists who thought Confederation might still be capable of recognizing the bifurcated nature of the country and those who argued that English Canadians would never allow the dream of Bourassa to be achieved. The debate was no longer between Cartier and Bourassa, but between Bourassa and the historian Abbé Groulx. It was an *assemblée contradictoire* between supporters of a bicultural Canada and the advocates of a separate French-Canadian state: Canadian biculturalism *versus* Quebec separatism. Unfortunately for the country as a whole, English Canada — its view obscured by King's smoke bombs, and distracted by the pursuit of profit, the reconstruction of a depressed Canada, and the salvation of a world ravaged by totalitarianism — remained ignorant of the struggle going on in Quebec's intellectual circles.

It was because it was so uninformed that the rest of the country responded slowly and with such equivocation and confusion to Quebec's Quiet Revolution. Transformation of the institutional face of Quebec generated vociferous demands for the immediate and total rebuilding of Confederation that caught Canadians outside *la belle province* unawares. It is difficult to reconstruct the atmosphere of the 1960's debate on the constitution — the bewilderment, embarrassment, and, not occasionally, anger aroused in English Canada by the shouts of

*mâtres chez nous, egalite ou indépendance*, associate state status, and all the other slogans of the Quiet Revolutionaries. One of the participants in the so-called "dialogue of the deaf" has described the situation perfectly:

There were times. . . when the Great Debate threatened to become the Great Bore. The same questions were asked again and again, with the same paucity of convincing responses. The same speakers turned up with the same speech on the same subject in different parts of the country month in and month out as the fog spread from Bonavista to Vancouver Island. No self-respecting journalist, academician, or preacher (and much of the time the three were one) was without at least one speech in the top drawer explaining what Quebec wanted (or couldn't have). . . . The country was in trouble, but the discussion industry never had it so good!<sup>37</sup>

The official response to all this, the appointment of 1963 of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, appeared on the surface to be a slavish imitation of Mackenzie King's politics of evasion. In fact it was not. When one looked below the surface of Prime Minister Pearson's appointment of the Commission one saw that this gesture was in fact the triumph of the Bourassa position. The Commission's composition and terms of reference begged the question the Commissioners were supposedly appointed to answer. The Commissioners, and especially co-chairman André Laurendeau, had a distinct bias in favour of biculturalism.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, the terms of reference instructed them to "inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races".<sup>39</sup> It should hardly have been surprising that the Commission's *Preliminary Report* in 1965 explained that in "our opinion the dominating idea in our terms of reference was 'equal partnership between the two founding races'."<sup>40</sup> Nor should it have been astounding that the early volumes of the Laurendeau-Dunton *Report* advocated massive efforts to make biculturalism the fundamental feature of the Canadian constitution. What was surprising, however, was the fact that the Commission, once it lost the guidance of Laurendeau, and once it got beyond its common ground of support for bilingualism, began to falter. As the Commission turned its attention to the crucial question of how the division of powers ought to be readjusted so as to deal with Quebec's demand for decentralization, it ground to a halt, stuttered



nervously once or twice, and collapsed.

The disintegration of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism could not have been better timed if it had been part of a Victorian melodrama or a modern television situation comedy. It gave up the ghost just as English-Canadian resistance to any further decentralization beyond that embodied in the Pearson years of "cooperative federalism" was strengthening. And it coincided with the rise to power of a French-Canadian intellectual who was firmly in the Bourassa tradition, and who, equally firmly, was opposed to any further erosion of federal power. Pierre-Elliott Trudeau enacted the Official Languages Act in 1969 and quietly interred the Royal Commission in 1970. He had finally established what Henri Bourassa had claimed: that Canada was officially a bilingual country.

By 1969 many Canadians probably believed that Canada was now a unity in duality. The 1968 election, having apparently been fought on the issue of "one Canada" or *deux nations*, ensured that unity was still the primary characteristic of the federation politically, although linguistic duality had been declared in the Languages Act. What few people noticed amid the uproar of 1968-1969 was that Ottawa had opted only for bilingualism, not for official recognition of biculturalism as well. It was by then evident, and becoming steadily more obvious, that the country would not accept cultural as well as linguistic duality. In response to the political pressure of the so-called Third Force — the non Anglo-Saxon, non French — the government moved in 1971 to recognize the contribution of European groups other than French and English. Nine days before the visit to Canada of Premier Alexei Kosygin in October, 1971, Prime Minister Trudeau made a pilgrimage to Winnipeg to announce "government support for the preservation and development of Canada's many ethnic cultures."<sup>41</sup> What this meant was that the country supported a policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework"<sup>42</sup> Officially, Canada was now a unity in that it was "one Canada"; a duality in that it had two official languages; and a diversity in that it recognized and supported the existence of many different cultural groups. Unity in duality and diversity.

Hegel said (or Marx said that he said) that all great men and events occur twice in history. And the indiscriminating observer, comparing the situation Cartier described in 1865 with that worked out between 1968 and 1971, might think history has repeated itself. But the truth

lies more with Marx's modification of Hegel's dictum than with Hegel's observation itself. Marx agreed that all great things in history occurred twice, but he added that they occurred "the first time as tragedy, the second as farce."<sup>43</sup> When one observes the manner in which the country has stumbled toward the present arrangement, one is tempted to agree with Marx. If Cartier was tragic, Stanley Haidaisz's career as general factotum responsible for multiculturalism has indeed been a farce.

## VI.

What conclusion can one draw from this tangled skein?

We ought to note, first, that the debate over the nature of Confederation, which has always been fruitful of disagreement, has always been with us in the past; and always will be before us in the future. There is no chance of its ending, short of the disappearance of Canada, because there is no possibility of diversity's elimination. Canadian nationalism has been, and can be only "a nationalism differentiating and minimal", not "assimilative and integral".<sup>44</sup> This is so because "the society of allegiance admits of a diversity the society of compact does not, and one of the blessings of Canadian life is that there is no Canadian way of life, much less two, but a unity under the Crown admitting of a thousand diversities."<sup>45</sup> There can be no monolithic nationalism, no universally accepted myths or symbols. Pierre Berton to the contrary, the C.P.R. can no more constitute the "National Dream" than the image of Canada's landscape and character.

Secondly, the debate on the nature of Canadian unity, while never allowed to become an issue in partisan politics, has always been, and must always be, settled by the political process. Though advocates of uniculturalism have never succeeded in making a major political party the vehicle for their programme, the issue they have raised has always been dealt with by the political parties in a bipartisan fashion. The Canadian experience has shown us that our political tradition is to ignore divisive issues as long as possible, and then swiftly to put an end to them by a decision taken with little or no direct consultation with the people. That was how the challenge presented by D'Alton McCarthy was handled in 1890: so, too, the response to the

peremptory questions posed by the Quiet Revolution in 1963 and 1969. Thus it has been; thus it will continue to be. (And a good thing, too!)

Finally, although the Canadian experience has been always to retain diversity in some manner or other, the diversity we have adhered to has, till now, been limited. Our diversity has been that of English, Scot, French, and Ukrainian; rather than white, red, brown, and black. Our record has been that we "turn 'em out Canadians — all but the yellow and brown." And here, of course, is the area where innovation is desperately needed. At the present time Canada faces many serious questions, but none of them more pressing than the riddle of what role to assign to her citizens of native ancestry. We are also debating what our immigration policy ought to be. There have been recent revelations of racism in the application, if not the formulation, of our immigration laws; we can expect more demands for greater discrimination against non-whites in both policy and enforcement in the months ahead. If Canada is ever to be "a unity under the Crown admitting of a thousand diversities", such demands must be rejected. Some livelier hues must be added to the monochromatic portrait of Canadian diversity that now hangs in the national gallery of our history.

I want to hammer a beautiful colored bruise on the whole American monolith. I want a breathing chimney on the corner of the continent. I want a country to break in half so men can learn to break their lives in half. I want History to jump on Canada's spine with sharp skates. I want the edge of a tin can to drink America's throat. I want two hundred million to know that everything can be different, any old different.<sup>46</sup>

#### Footnotes

1. J.S. Woodsworth, "Some Aspects of Immigration", *The University Magazine*, XIII (1914), 191.
2. *Viewpoint* by Vancouver reporter Doug Collins, CBKST-TV, 18 November, 1974.
3. *Acadian Recorder*, quoted in Ricker, Saywell and Cook, *Canada, a Modern Study* (Toronto, 1963), 101; J. Howe quoted in J.M. Beck, *Joseph Howe, Anti-Confederate* (Ottawa, 1956), 15.
4. W.L. Morton, *The Canadian Identity* (Madison and Toronto, 1961), 100-7, 110-12.
5. D.G. Creighton, *The Road to Confederation* (Toronto, 1964), 141-2.
6. A.R.M. Lower, *Canadians in the Making* (Don Mills, 1958), 289.
7. G.F.G. Stanley, "Regionalism in Canadian History", *Ontario History*, LI (1959), 167.
8. P.B. Waite (ed.), *Confederation Debates in the Province of Canada/1865* (Carleton Library edition, Toronto, 1963), 51 and 50.
9. Quoted in J.M. Beck (ed.), *The Shaping of Canadian Federalism* (Toronto, 1971), 159.
10. P.B. Waite, *Canada, 1874-1896: Arduous Destiny* (Toronto, 1971), 184.
11. Quoted in F. Landon, "D'Alton McCarthy and the Politics of the Later Eighties", Canadian Historical Association, *Report of the Annual Meeting 1932*, 46.

12. Stayner Speech, 12 July, 1889, *Toronto Daily Mail*, 13 July, 1889.
13. *Speech of Mr. D'Alton McCarthy delivered on Thursday, 12 December, 1889 at Ottawa*, (n.p., n.d.), 9-10.
14. *Debates of the House of Commons*, Fourth Session, Sixth Parliament, XXIX (1890), columns 674-5.
15. G. Smith, *Canada and the Canadian Question* (Toronto, 1891), 5-6.
16. *Ibid.*, 206-7.
17. *Ibid.*, 275.
18. *Ibid.*, 215.
19. *Debates of the House of Commons*, 1890, columns 881-2 and 1017-8.
20. With the exception, of course, of British Columbia, where the objections had been based on both economic and racial arguments. See J.A. Munro, "British Columbia and the 'Chinese Evil': Canada's First Anti-Asiatic Immigration Law", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, VI (1971), 42-9.
21. S. Leacock, "Canada and the Immigration Problem", *The National Review*, LII (1911), 317 and 323.
22. Principal Sparling, "Introduction" to J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates, or Coming Canadians* (Toronto, 1909).
23. R. Connor [C.W. Gordon], *The Foreigner. A Tale of Saskatchewan* (Toronto, 1909), especially 23-5 and 37-41. This theme in Connor's work has been analysed carefully in J.L. Thompson and J.H. Thompson, "Ralph Connor and the Canadian Identity", *Queen's Quarterly*, LXXIX (1972), 166-9.
24. R.J.C. Stead, "The Mixer" (1905), quoted in R.C. Brown and R. Cook, *Canada 1896-1921: a Nation Transformed* (Toronto, 1974), 73.
25. Leacock, "Canada and the Immigration Problem", 318.
26. Rev. W.D. Reid, in R.C. Brown and M.E. Prang (eds.), *Confederation to 1949* (Scarborough, 1966), 84.
27. J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates*, 281.
28. J.S. Woodsworth (1905), quoted in Brown and Cook, *Canada 1896-1921*, 73.
29. H. Bourassa (1904), quoted *ibid.*, 74.
30. A. Smith, "Metaphor and Nationality in North America", *Canadian Historical Review*, LI (1970), 268. This paper owes far more than this isolated quotation to Professor Smith's stimulating analysis, as students of the topic will realize.
31. H. Bourassa (1917), quoted in R. Cook, *Canada and the French-Canadian Question* (Toronto, 1966), 51.
32. C.W. Humphries, "The Banning of a Book in British Columbia", *B.C. Studies*, I (1968-69), especially 3-5. The British Columbians, as usual, played the maverick, in that their efforts in the interwar period were not devoted to educating the Oriental immigrant to be a Canadian so much as they were educating eastern Canadians that the "Oriental menace" was a national problem worthy of Parliament's attention. See P.E. Roy, "Educating the 'East': British Columbia and the Oriental Question in the Interwar Years", *B.C. Studies*, 18 (Summer 1973), 50-69; and P.E. Roy, "The Oriental 'Menace' in British Columbia", in S.M. Trofimenkoff (ed.), *The Twenties in Western Canada* (Papers of the Western Canadian Studies Conference, Calgary, March 1972), (Ottawa, 1972), 243-58.
33. J.T.M. Anderson, *The Education of New Canadians* (Toronto, 1918). I am indebted to Ms. Theresa Anne Holizki of Saskatoon for information on Anderson's career as Superintendent for the Humboldt area, Director of Education of New Canadians, and Premier of Saskatchewan in the 1920's and 1930's.
34. M.K. Mott, "The 'Foreign Peril': Nativism in Winnipeg, 1916-1923", (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1970), 103 and 84. For Mott's analysis of the assimilative purposes of teacher training, curricula, texts, and exercises in the early 1920's see *ibid.*, 78-88.
35. R.M. Stamp, "Schools on Wheels: The Railway Car Schools of Northern Ontario", *Canada*, I (Spring, 1974), 36. Note also D. Avery's comments on the assimilationist purpose of Frontier College in "Canadian Immigration Policy and the 'Foreign' Navy 1896-1914", Canadian Historical Association, *Canadian Historical Papers 1972* (Ottawa, n.d.), 147. And, finally, see Sir J.S. Willison, "Immigration and Settlement" in J.O. Miller (ed.), *The New Era in Canada* (Toronto, 1917), 121.
36. F.R. Scott, "WLMK", in *The Blasted Pine*, 36.

37. R. Cook, *The Maple Leaf Forever* (Toronto, 1971) 25.
38. R. Lemelin, quoted by J.T. Saywell, *International Journal* XX (1965), 381.
39. *Preliminary Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism* (Ottawa, 1965), 151.
40. *Ibid.*, 21.
41. *Canadian News Facts*, V (October 19, 1971), 713.
42. P.E. Trudeau, quoted *ibid.*
43. K. Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York, 1963; new edition based on second edition, Hamburg, 1869), 15.
44. W.L. Morton, "The Extension of the Franchise in Canada: A Study in Democratic Nationalism", *Canadian Historical Association Report of the Annual Meeting 1943*, 80.
45. Morton, *The Canadian Identity*, 111.
46. L. Cohen, *Beautiful Losers* (Bantam Edition, Toronto, 1967), 235-6.