

also be achieved to examine major changes in our institutions – something many Westerners favour – and such institutional change will have to better serve all Canadians. Hence this challenge to unity is the West's opportunity, the West's chance, to get a better deal out of Confederation. As it is for all Canadians. And I will be asking all Canadians, including Quebecers, to make a greater effort to understand the particular needs and aspirations of the West.

Language equality

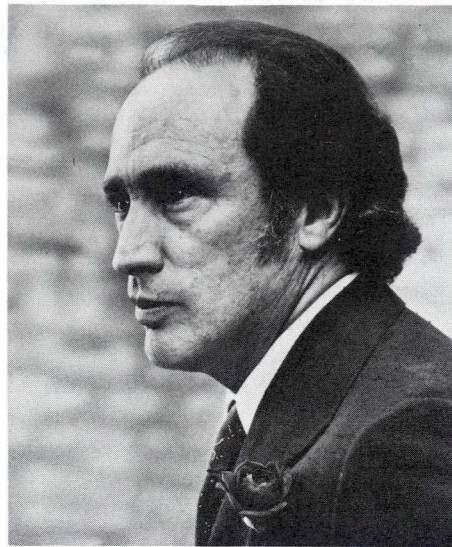
I now wish to turn to a matter where greater understanding from the West (and from other parts of the country) can be of so much help to Canada. I have in mind what has happened in Quebec, and the vital importance of language equality if we are to have unity in this country.

What Quebecers are asking of Confederation often seems not very different from what other Canadians are asking: greater equality of opportunity, decent lives for themselves, decent prospects for their children. Some people also find a striking resemblance between the grievances of Westerners and of Quebecers: insecurity about the future; barriers to wider opportunity; isolation and distance from decision-making; national government and corporate business that do not sufficiently reflect their own values and aspirations.

Quebeckers feel, in short, they are not participating fully in Canadian society, not sharing fully in its benefits – a feeling that is echoed by many Westerners about their own place in Canada:

The difference is that Westerners usually relate these feelings to questions of geography and national economic structures – while in Quebec they are usually related to the question of language.... I want to try to clear away some misconceptions about Quebec, and about the role of language. For if some Quebecers think that Calgary still has wooden sidewalks, there are still some Westerners who know Quebec only as folklore!

Quebeckers are not any longer seeking passive autonomy. In the past, Quebec was a relatively rural and insular society. Then came the modernizing Quiet Revolution, which for the



Mr. Trudeau's speech on April 18 was broadcast on national television.

first time brought French and English-speaking Canadians into direct large-scale competition for the same things: for jobs and power in modern business and government, for technological and urban growth. This competition was one of the best things that ever happened in Quebec. It required a spectacular "catching up" with the rest of the country, with the rest of North America – through reform in government, in education, in social and economic policies – and in attitudes. This vigorous "boot strap" operation is something which Western Canadians – who themselves have built so much, so fast; who love to compete – can surely understand and appreciate. All this was undertaken in Quebec with great vigour some two decades ago, and is still going on.

But it also required something else. Competition works only if people feel they can compete on the basis of equal opportunity. Such is still not the feeling for Quebecers, and it is not hard to see why.

The population of Canada is 27 per cent francophone. Yet even by the early 1970s, studies showed that the national proportion of French-Canadian senior executives was less than 9 per cent in the corporate sector, and less than 15 per cent in the federal Public Service.

The population of Quebec is more than 80 percent French-speaking. Yet a senior Quebec corporate executive recently reported that, out of Quebec's

104 largest business firms, only four have five or more French Canadian senior executives – and 43 of these firms do not have a single French Canadian in their senior ranks.

English domination

Quebec's economic life has been dominated for more than a century by Montreal's English-speaking business community. They have made very great contributions to Quebec. But only in recent years have they begun to take concrete action, recognizing the fundamental need for equal opportunity in business for Quebec's French-speaking majority....

What Quebec needs are fair and sensible solutions to language problems. Solutions which recognize that a million English-speaking Quebecers wish to – and have every right to – continue living in their province as first-class citizens; solutions which at the same time ensure a pre-eminent role for the language of the francophone majority – in Quebec's workplaces, schools, and public institutions.

Try to put yourself in the position of the French-speaking Quebecer. In Winnipeg or Calgary, would a young technician or clerk expect to be hired if he spoke only French? Or expect to have his job application rejected because he spoke only English, the predominant language of the city? Of course not. Yet the reverse has often been the case in Montreal. In Vancouver or Toronto, would anyone tolerate a situation where the doctors and nurses in some major city hospitals spoke only French – and were unable to care for sick people in their own language, English, the predominant language of the city? Yet the reverse has often been the case in Montreal.

Why did last summer's Montreal air-traffic controllers crisis become such a potent symbol to Quebecers of language inequality? In large part, I think, because the most visibly modern, future-oriented job sector – aviation – seemed to be saying to Quebecers that tasks in which other people all over the world are normally able to use their own language, are tasks in which they may never look forward to using the French language in Quebec....

Hence, many Quebecers went to the polls last November freshly convinced