

Mr. Wells is simply not responding to the deep and abiding concern of a francophone majority in Quebec surrounded by almost 300 million English-speaking persons on the North American continent. He is fixated in centralizing power in the federal government. That is his solution even when it doesn't fit the problem.

Let me quote from Ed Broadbent concerning the outlook inside Quebec if the Meech Lake Accord is defeated. Mr. Broadbent said on October 26,

"I see very few Quebecers of political consequence who will credibly defend federalism in a new referendum in Quebec. Would you, could you, if you were the Premier of Quebec? A number of leading figures in all three federal parties in Quebec have already said they will not do so.

"How can they ask Quebecers to once again [as in the 1980 referendum] vote for Canada if the rest of Canada turns down the most minimal set of proposals?

"And, if a few major figures will defend the federal option, does anyone really doubt that the independence vote will get the additional 10% required to win?

"And does anyone seriously believe that if this once unthinkable possibility becomes the reality, independence for Quebec can mean anything but catastrophe for all of Canada?"

Perhaps Mr. Broadbent, Mr. Stanfield, Mr. Bourassa and ... as you heard recently ... Mr. Peterson and so many others are wrong about a strengthened and potentially fatal separatism in Quebec. Maybe Quebec will not leave Confederation if what it sees as its minimal position in the Meech Lake Accord is rejected. But if Quebec does not separate, it will be in spite of Mr. Wells' rejection of a strong provincial voice to protect the francophone majority's language and culture.

If the Meech Lake Accord is rejected, I foresee a struggle for the hearts and minds of Quebecers. It will be a struggle to persuade them that they can protect their language and culture within Canada, that they do not have to separate to do so. It will be a struggle where, unwittingly and with the most honest intentions, Mr. Wells has already played a deeply harmful role.