

THE ASPIRATIONS OF QUEBEC AND THOSE OF THE REST OF CANADA. EVEN THIS DISTINCTION IS AN OVERSIMPLIFICATION, FOR WHAT IS INVOLVED IS FRENCH-CANADIAN, NOT JUST QUEBEC, ALIENATION. THE CHALLENGE, THEREFORE, IS TWOFOLD: TO LESSEN REGIONAL DISPARITIES GENERALLY AND, SIMULTANEOUSLY AND WITH EQUAL COMMITMENT, TO PURSUE ALL REASONABLE MEASURES TO GIVE FRENCH-CANADIANS, IN ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, A TRUE SENSE OF BELONGING.

IT IS NAIVE TO ASSUME THAT SEPARATISM WILL BE SWEEPED AWAY ON A RISING TIDE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH OR, INDEED, THAT THE OTHER THREATS TO NATIONAL UNITY POSED BY THE MANY MANIFESTATIONS OF REGIONALISM ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE AMENABLE TO ECONOMIC SOLUTIONS ALONE. THE PRESENT ISSUE OF QUEBEC SEPARATISM IS NOT A LONE ABERRATION THRUST ON US SUDDENLY TO DISTURB THE OTHERWISE SMOOTH AND PREDICTABLE FLOW OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. WHEN THIS CRISIS PASSES, THERE ARE BOUND TO BE OTHERS IN OTHER REGIONS. THIS IS THE PRICE OF DIVERSITY, WHATEVER ITS COMPENSATING BENEFITS. IT IS PART OF THE PERPLEXING DICHOTOMY OF CANADIAN FEDERALISM. EACH NEW WAVE OF DISCONTENT PROMPTS SEPARATIST RUMBLINGS OR, AT LEAST, A CALL FOR THE DRASTIC OVERHAUL OF STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS. WITNESS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE CONSTANT REFERENCES TO WESTERN ALIENATION AND MARITIME DISILLUSIONMENT.