

inflation dilemma we, as well as everyone else, have to face, the outlook for the future is not very reassuring. Hopeless? No. If we were to equate partial failure with bankruptcy, what country in the world could claim to be sure of its future?

There is profound concern in Canada, but it is neither fatal nor paralyzing. On the contrary, our political scene has never been more lively, or so active in the search for solutions. The majority of Canadians, including the majority of *Francophones* (if we are to believe the surveys, which are unanimous in this respect) still have faith in their country. They are persuaded that an updated Confederation remains the system for Canada's future. Except for the party advocating Quebec sovereignty, all the Canadian and Quebec political parties are talking of a rejuvenated and renewed federalism as the effective solution. A collective reawakening is being experienced, and we are understanding more and more clearly what changes are necessary. It remains to be seen whether these changes can be made in time, but everything seems to indicate that they can. Federalism is a very flexible political instrument. It has already weathered several crises in Canada and it is reasonable to believe that it can weather the present one.

I hope you will not find me presumptuous in saying that the outcome of our present difficulties should be of concern both to Europe and to France, and that it may have important consequences for the future of the Western world. From a European point of view — but, rather than making statements, let me ask a few questions. For example, what immediate effect could the destabilization or break-up of present-day Canada have on Europe? For this is the possibility with which we are confronted. It would be vain to hope that a vague monetary union, or even an economic community, would suffice to bind the Canada provinces together in a coherent whole. Even with its present size, Canada only just succeeds in maintaining its own identity and its independent existence beside the United States. All serious observers agree in predicting that a scattering of isolated provinces would have little chance of doing as well. If Quebec, which represents more than one-quarter of the Canadian population, leaves the Confederation, thus opening up a huge breach in the centre of the territory, it is more than doubtful whether the rest of Canada could survive as a coherent political entity. In the longer term, it is more likely that each piece of a divided Canada, including Quebec, would naturally gravitate towards the huge mass constituted by the United States. Furthermore, this "longer term" might not be so very long. In North America changes occur much more rapidly than in Europe, and there is not the same balance of powers that is found in Europe. The benevolent but massive presence of the United States is an overwhelming reality that could have the effect of precipitating events that could efface in a few decades all traces of what today constitutes Canada as a distinct political entity. This does not mean that the United States would launch a campaign for the conquest or annexation of Canada; its mass alone would act as a magnet to attract the scattered and isolated provinces. Would this new situation be in the interest of Europe, and France in particular? Would they somehow benefit from such an expansion of American power, so that it extended from the Mexican border to the North Pole? I think that all of us would spontaneously answer no. No one in today's world would care to see the strength of a super-power increased. Is not one of the objects of the efforts to unite Europe the