

• the appointment of presidents and chief executive officers of those federal and Crown corporations of major importance;

(b) the Council will give its advice on the following questions:

- the monetary, budgetary and fiscal policies of the Federal Government;
- mechanisms and operating formulas used for equalization; and
- in general, on all matters having, in its opinion, substantial regional or provincial impact.

#### Committee composition

“The Council should reflect Canada’s duality by means of a permanent committee, half of which will be made up of francophone delegates, which will be convened whenever this dimension of the Canadian reality is likely to be affected by federal proposals submitted for the Council’s consideration.

“This committee should exercise the following council powers:

(a) it will ratify:

- federal proposals in linguistic matters;
- the appointment of presidents and chief executive officers of federal bodies of a cultural nature;

(b) it will give its advice on any cultural issues which are of federal jurisdiction and will ensure that the federal public service reflects Canada’s dualism at all levels.

“The Constitution will contain a provision ensuring the Federal Council the necessary human, physical and financing resources, while protecting its independence from the House of Commons and from the Federal Government.

#### Foreign policy and defence

“The Constitution should reaffirm the Federal Government’s traditional role in matters of foreign policy, international relations and defence.

“The central government should continue to conclude international treaties, except that in matters pertaining to provincial jurisdiction, the treaties concluded by the central government should only take effect with the consent of the provinces concerned....

“For their own purposes and provided they act in accordance with the Federal Government’s diplomatic policy, the provinces should be entitled to establish delegations of foreign offices abroad and should be able to conclude international agreements relating to matters within their jurisdiction.”

### Federal and provincial reaction to Liberal document

The Quebec Liberal party’s proposals for a renewed federalism have been published in the midst of a federal election campaign. Both Prime Minister Joe Clark and federal Liberal leader Pierre Trudeau have said they would not use the federal election campaign as a platform for attacking the referendum question, sovereignty-association, or the Quebec government. They do not want to “turn this election campaign into a pre-referendum campaign”, said former Liberal Cabinet Minister Jean Chrétien.

**Quebec Premier René Lévesque** described the Liberals’ proposals as “spineless” and “basically fraudulent”. He suggested that Mr. Ryan had tried to trick people into believing that significant changes were being suggested that would give Quebec more power, while in reality far too much power would be left with the Federal Government. “These proposals represent a gallop backwards compared to what has traditionally been proposed by Quebec governments,” Mr. Lévesque said. He said the proposals had been drawn up “to give the illusion of a strong will for fundamental change” and to give the impression that Quebec Liberals “are seeking a vast decentralization of federalism”. “But from a Quebec point of view – which the document avoids with a noble detachment – a completely different reality appears when the proposals are looked at closely,” said Mr. Lévesque.

**Prime Minister Clark** praised the Quebec Liberal leader’s work in preparing the document saying that “in general terms” Mr. Ryan’s proposals “clearly anticipate the continuing nature of Canada’s federal system”. “The time has come in this country to end the *status quo* Constitution, to approach a renewal of Canadian federalism,” said Mr. Clark. He called the proposals “workmanlike and valuable” as a means of advancing the Constitution debate. The Prime Minister also said that Mr. Ryan made “some interesting proposals – some of which I disagree with, some of which I proposed”.

**Liberal leader Pierre Trudeau** said the proposals for constitutional renewal were a “valuable contribution” to discussions on reforming Canadian federalism. He said he found the document a useful effort in defining renewed federalism. “It is a well-done document, well constructed, serious, not at all vengeful and very constructive,” he said.

**Liberal member of Parliament Jean Chrétien**, considered by the federal Liberal party as its federal-provincial relations specialist, called it a “refreshing document that recognized Quebec has to remain in Confederation”. He said that there “may be room for discussion and negotiation” to refine the plan.

**New Democratic Party leader Edward Broadbent** said Mr. Ryan’s paper was more acceptable than that of Premier Lévesque “because it deals precisely in the context of a federal Canada.... It requires careful detailed study”.

The proposals for constitutional reform were given general but cautious approval by Ontario’s opposition parties, while **Ontario Premier William Davis** said his government would need to study them further before comment. **Ontario NDP leader Michael Cassidy** said Ontario had been moving in the direction proposed by Mr. Ryan. He said he had “general sympathy” with the proposals and that Ontario should move quickly with answers to show Quebecers it was prepared to make changes to assure Canada’s future. **Ontario Liberal leader Stuart Smith** praised the Quebec Liberal party’s paper as “a positive contribution to efforts to redesign our country”, without the “trickery” of the Parti Québécois’s proposals.

**Quebec Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Claude Morin** rejected the Liberal party’s proposals saying, “after co-operative federalism, profitable federalism, restructured federalism and many others, we now have seen the birth of tangled federalism that serves only to mask the *status quo*”. He said the Liberal party was almost ignoring the fact that Quebec was the homeland of a nation. “For the Liberals, Quebec continues to be a province just like the others, one province in ten,” he said.

Two pro-federalist groups in Quebec, the Positive Action Committee (PAC) and the 300,000-member unity group Quebec-Canada Committee, reacted favourably to the proposals. Alex K. Paterson, PAC’s co-chairman, said that the proposals contained much that was “attractive and workable”, and that they invited “serious and thoughtful consideration”. Guy Bouchat of the Quebec-Canada Committee said he “agrees entirely” that language rights should be entrenched in the Canadian Constitution, that federal institutions should operate in both French and English and that social services should be dispensed by the provinces.