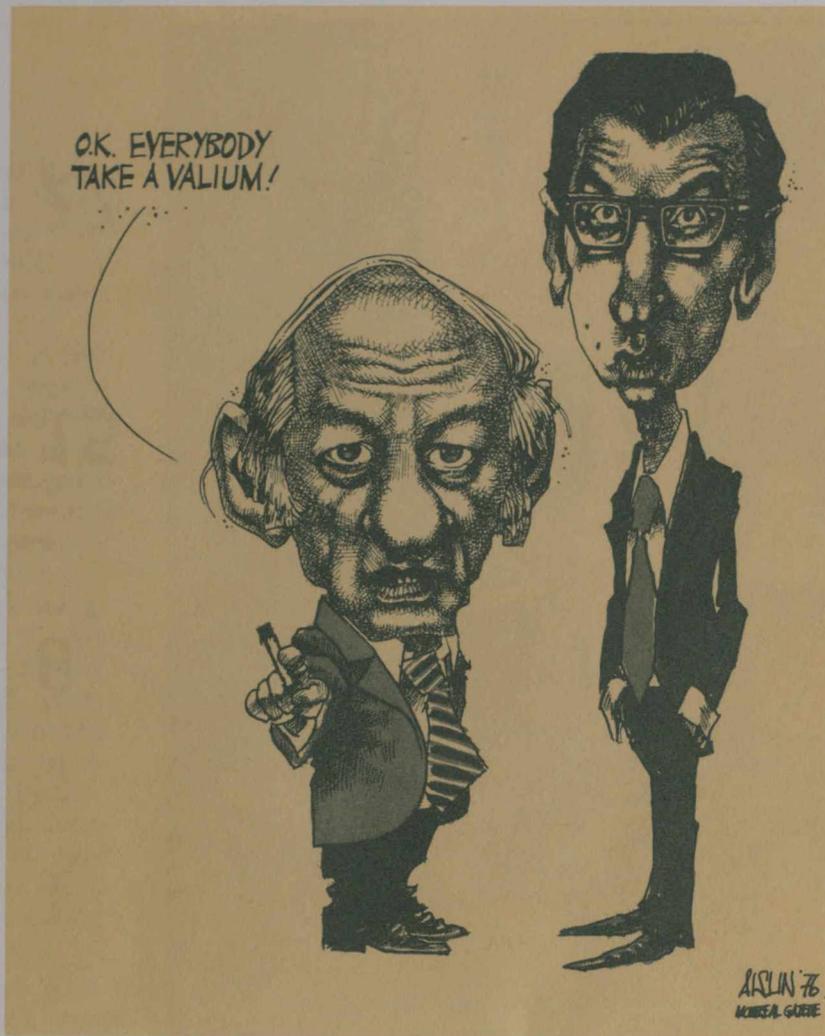


### L'Adaptation

It is a long way from Bengough to Aislin. Aislin's real name is Terry Mosher (or at least he claims it is), and both his line and his point of view are as modern and as unrelenting as rock music. He works at the *Montreal Gazette* — it would be absurd to say that he works for any man or institution — and he concerns himself with intricate questions. His cartoons, like good books and paintings, demand much from the viewer. He is, as Mordecai Richler has said, "even handedly malicious."

The shorter gentleman depicted here is René Lévesque. Mr. Lévesque was once a Liberal, but he left the party in 1967 to pursue the nonviolent creation of a politically separate nation of Quebec. In 1968 he helped found the Parti Québécois. The party was unsuccessful in two provincial elections, but in 1975 it began to stress basic government reform and such issues as unemployment. It promised to hold a referendum before moving on separation.

The shift in emphasis had an apparent effect. Though a post-election poll showed that only eleven per cent of Quebecers favoured separation, on November 15, 1976, Lévesque's party took forty-one per cent



of the vote and 70 of the 110 seats in the provincial legislature, which is interestingly called the National Assembly. Lévesque replaced an old Liberal party colleague, Robert Bourassa (the tall man), as premier; and as Aislin's cartoon suggests, there was some alarm.

Lévesque, for one, remained calm and counselled that others do too. He promised to preserve English language schools and attempted to reassure the financial community. Still Quebec separation is hardly a dead issue. Peter Newman, editor of *Maclean's* magazine, points out that "even if Lévesque's amazing sweep was less a vote for separation than a celebration of the true root and flow of democracy, the party he leads was created for only one purpose: to turn Quebec into an independent republic." Prime Minister Trudeau has also taken a realistic look at the Quebec situation: "There is no doubt that we have . . . entered into a period during which we will be examining and testing our structures, our institutions, our relationships, and perhaps our beliefs . . . Unity, for us in Canada, cannot mean sameness . . . Politics of federalism are politics of accommodation — on the part of governments and, it needs to be said, of people."

From Macdonald to Laurier to King to Trudeau, the Canadian Confederation has remained intact by always adjusting to changing realities. The challenge continues.

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