

transparence, as they say in Quebec; we would make it very clear who we were, what we were doing, and make it absolutely open and explicit that we were operating both provincially and then take our place in the federation of provincial political parties which constitutes the federal NDP. This way we can influence the federal NDP and all the other NDPs in the other provinces but they can't influence us backwards. We retain our autonomy within Quebec with regard to Quebec policy.

It is still not an idea that is fully understood by everybody in Quebec but it is a very catchy one and people who grasp it, who finally understand it, are struck by its originality and its *power*. We had very clear evidence of this power over the weekend. We, the Quebec NDP, proposed the resolution in January which we sent to the federal council . . . and it was presented to the federal convention where the federal leader argues for it, I argue for it, Allan Blakeney of Saskatchewan argues for it, Bob Rae argues for it, Nova Scotia argues for it, and it is adopted massively. This means it becomes the policy of the federal NDP and at the same time it is supported by every other provincial section. And as I said to the Quebec press yesterday: "I have allies." What allies does Mr. Bourassa (Robert, the leader of the Liberal government in Quebec) have? What allies does Mr. Johnson (leader of the PQ) have? How are they going to bring about the constitutional change that Quebec needs?

So, it's been largely a matter, if I may use such lofty terms, of strategic thinking and convincing and arguing. None of it came overnight and we had to grope our way through this development.

EXCAL: How did the last provincial election help your efforts?

HARNEY: We ran in the 1985 provincial election about three to four weeks after we founded the provincial party. We had virtually no riding organizations and we made the conscious decision that we weren't organized, therefore we should run in order to get organized. We used the election as a means to contact people and we got, where we ran, an average of three and a half percent of the vote.

But what happened was that we became the third party and all of the small left wing groups in Quebec which had been considered more important and larger than the Quebec NDP, suddenly began to disappear for all intents and purposes. The Movement Socialiste, and various nationalist groups just didn't show on the map although they got an awful lot more press at the beginning of the campaign than we did. So we had to claw our way into the Quebec mentality and we did.

EXCAL: In the next provincial election, do you foresee the NDP picking up a lot of voters that went to the PQ over the last 15 years or so?

HARNEY: Yes, but that question would lead you to a false analysis. You mustn't think of political parties as having troops and of course it's to be expected that the NDP is now getting a lot of support from what used to be called the social democratic votes before the PQ. At this stage now, the people coming over to the NDP in Quebec, about six out of 10 are former PQ voters, or voted PQ once or twice without necessarily being married to it. About two to three out of 10 are coming from the Liberals and one of those 10 had been tuned out and had stopped voting because they had no choice.

EXCAL: But there is a nationalist sentiment attached to the PQ voter. How would you reconcile this with the federal vision of the NDP?

HARNEY: We have absolutely no problem. The Quebec NDP has, since 1984, had a very clear and strong nationalist stance, and that is what is making us attractive to a lot of people in Quebec. But at the same time, we say we want to remain in a renewed Confederation. It's our challenge that we're throwing to Quebec and to Canada—to make room for Quebec in a new Confederation. Many of the people who were at the convention as delegates would have been a few years ago fighting on a different front, saying it was impossible to change Canada. Now, they're seen one political party that's opened up tremendously towards Quebec.

EXCAL: At the NDP convention held in Montreal, a resolution on Quebec was passed nearly unanimously. That resolution spoke to the special status Quebec has in Canada. You had earlier proposed a stronger version. How was that version different than the resolution passed and are you happy with the final product?

HARNEY: There was virtually no change. A lot of the confusion that has ensued I have discovered was caused by a wretched translation. It was only Sunday that I read the English version of our original resolution which some press outfit translated. It was completely horrible, diametrically opposed to what we had actually said.

EXCAL: How so?

HARNEY: For example, we had said that Quebec should have the right to legislate in matters of linguistic rights, *dans la respect de ces minorités*, observing full respect for its minorities. The translation in English said that Quebec should have exclusive rights to legislate in matters of linguistic rights with *respect* to its minorities, which is exactly the opposite. I'm sure by the time that hit the wires in Vancouver, people were wondering just what we were up to. But we were never up to anything of the kind.

Actually, in our discussion in the federal council with Mr. Broadbent and other sections of the Party, we proposed the phraseological or terminological modifications of our phrase because we had come up with better words after we had adopted our resolution. Rather than speaking in terms of exclusivity, since we are talking about the federal Constitution, what we want is something in the Constitution which will recognize Quebec's rights and power to legislate in order to protect its *majority*.

That's the problem. The federal Constitution can reach in to Quebec right now and say you can't do that. But we are a minority within Canada, a minority within North America and you've got to let us protect ourselves. Unfortunately, the Charter of Rights, in its general provisions, has made it possible for any individual to find some judge some place to say that yes, that Quebec law is against freedom of expression and you'll have one individual wiping out a whole collectivity's right to survive . . . I'm certain that was never the intention of the people who put in the general provision in the Charter.

EXCAL: How do you think this will be greeted by the other provinces across Canada?

HARNEY: I think (the reaction) will be a good one . . . Your question a while ago 'doesn't this give Quebec a special status?' Well, Quebec has *always* had a special status since 1867. All you're doing is redefining that special status; you're making it a little bit clearer. Quebec has had a special status since 1774, since the Quebec Act . . . (Article 8) recognizes the existence of the French Canadian nation and their right to survival—to have their laws and that their laws should take precedence over all other laws. As a matter of fact, I'd rather have Article 8 of the Quebec Act than the last Constitution . . .

The resolution (passed on the weekend) does not propose a veto over the Constitution, it proposes a veto over new articles of the Constitution, additions or amendments to the Constitution which had the effect of taking away Quebec's cultural and linguistic rights and powers. There already are a lot of vetos in the Constitution. Ontario can veto over certain matters, for example . . . There isn't a single proposal here that says Quebec can veto the Constitution . . .

It wasn't Quebec who stayed out (of the Constitutional amendments of 1982), it was the other guys who went ahead, Quebec believed,

quite crudely and with total disrespect, and amended the Constitution without Quebec's agreement.

EXCAL: Are these resolutions going to be able to get Quebec to agree to these amendments? What effect will the NDP's resolution this past weekend have?

HARNEY: What Quebec is saying, what we are saying, and now the federal NDP is going to be saying this, is that if you want Quebec to sign the Articles of 1982, you're going to have to make some changes to them. The Charter of Rights would be affected insofar as they would affect Quebec's right to legislate to protect its linguistic majority. But somewhere else in the Constitution you would have to put in an article saying that Quebec would have a veto of the kind I just described.

EXCAL: What policies will the Quebec NDP offer the public to make itself a viable alternative to the PQ and the Liberals, specifically on the issue of Bill 101?

HARNEY: What we say in Quebec is that Quebec needs to have its own written Constitution, and that this Constitution should be arrived at through a democratically elected constituent assembly. The proposal put forth by this assembly should be voted on by the people of Quebec as a whole and it would become the established Constitution of Quebec. In that way we would, in Quebec, have recognized and made concrete the principle of popular sovereignty, that the people are supreme. This is not the case in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, etc. where the legislature is sovereign. We have a different political culture and we are going to express it this way.

What the NDP will certainly propose that within this written Constitution there would be two language charters, one charter of the French language and one for minority languages. The latter, for example, would contain provisions as the protection of English language universities, school systems, hospitals and major social institutions. These, by the way, are not protected in the federal Constitution and they exist in Quebec.

EXCAL: An issue that has received a high profile is that of bilingual signs . . .

HARNEY: Oh, yes, because it's an easy thing to talk about. It's symptomatic but a minor matter. Bilingual signs were not an issue until about a year ago when Mr. Bourassa came in and said he might permit bilingual signs. That raised up a whole storm, both from the Quebec nationalist wing and from people in the English end of Montreal. Most English speaking people in Quebec understand that generally speaking public signage should be in French and French only. Why? Because this is North America and in North America you have no problem learning English; you can catch English like a disease—you have to struggle to maintain French.

EXCAL: There are people in the rest of Canada that see hypocrisy in this law. With bilingualism the official policy in the rest of the country, how can Quebec prohibit the use of bilingual signs?

HARNEY: You have to understand that even as it stands, the Quebec law has a lot of clauses—it's only if you have a commerce that hires four or more people, it's only for exterior signs, and actually, Quebec doesn't prosecute. They've

only been forced to recently. The big worry is the big stores, the big commercial outfits. When I was a kid, in Quebec City and Montreal, most of the big commercial signs were in English only. A certain amount of compensation has to be done and Quebec is the only place in North America where the language and culture of the majority is French. What's wrong with looking at a little French? Don't forget you're dealing with a beleaguered, threatened nation which as English Canadians you're not in terms of your language.

EXCAL: But the English Canadians are a minority within Quebec and not allowing them to have bilingual signs, isn't that taking away from their rights?

HARNEY: It takes a little bit away from their rights just as, I suppose, my right of expression is somehow curtailed by the fact that I cannot drive down the street at 80 miles an hour. Rights are never absolute—you can't go around yelling fire in a crowded theatre on the principle of freedom of expression. And I will repeat until I am blue in the face and until you're blue in the ears, there is not linguistic minority in Canada that is better treated than the English. There are English schools at all levels, English universities, English hospitals, English social services. There is an unbelievable generosity towards the English minority in Quebec and if the Franco-Ontarians could find one quarter of (this generosity), they would be overjoyed.

EXCAL: You have run against Mr. Broadbent for the national leadership twice, actually finishing ahead of him in 1971 when you placed third, and in 1981 you criticized the NDP's stand on the Constitution. From these encounters, there have been rumours that there is no love lost between the two of you. What is your relationship with him?

HARNEY: I saw an article in *Maclean's* the other day that was sheer mythology—embittered relations and what have you. Mr. Broadbent and I have had it out a few times, but only on the Constitution question. I have absolutely no problem with Ed Broadbent's leadership and his policy positions on any other matter. I think he is a very good leader and he is becoming a great leader of the NDP.

Now—he has come around. The positions he stood up and supported last weekend, he would not have done so in 1981. Some of them he did but not all of them. As far as I'm concerned we have a true resolution. The issue, which was an intellectual and political one, is closed.

EXCAL: There are people in the federal NDP that view you warily. On the one hand, you are the Jean-Paul Harney that has accomplished a great deal in Quebec, while on the other, you're John Harney, formerly very active in Ontario and federal politics, that is seen as a "loose cannon." Where did this term come from?

HARNEY: That's rather cute. I don't mind it. I never put the Party's fundamental strategy or its drive or personality into question. I only disagreed with it on the (Constitution) question. I also disagreed with some of party leadership in Ontario when they threw out the Waffle faction in 1973 (an extremely nationalist wing). In that sense, they couldn't line me up. Whenever I felt the Party, through inadvertence or other reasons, was behaving undemocratically . . . I spoke out. I suppose that makes me a loose cannon but if the ship that is the NDP rides on a good even keel, you don't have to worry about loose cannons on deck.

EXCAL: All over the country, the NDP is scoring high on opinion polls. Is the NDP on the verge of breaking into Canada's political mainstream or are voters merely "parking" their votes until the next election?

HARNEY: That is, as you know, a very cute and fancy little facetious express. Lord knows what people will do two or three years down the road. But one thing that should be noted in all of this, is that NDP vote (in the opinion polls) has gone up to 33 percent because it has grown from three to four percent in Quebec to 35, almost all of the increase from the traditional 20 percent (support) the NDP has to the 30 percent level is due to the rise in Quebec.

Now because of this phenomenon a lot of people in English Canada are looking and saying 'hey, they are going someplace' and will consider voting NDP. This is what I claimed the NDP should have done 15 years ago: stop trying to build the Party only in English Canada. Now they are building the Party in English and French Canada and I was delighted to hear Mr. Broadbent say on the weekend that we are a national party.

Whenever I felt the Party, through inadvertence or other reasons, was behaving undemocratically . . . I spoke out. I suppose that makes me a loose cannon. But if the ship that is the NDP rides on a good even keel, you don't have to worry about loose cannons on deck.