

I feel that Quebec can continue to develop under a federal system which is renewed and adapted to current conditions, especially since the entire country is searching for a collective identity and since this process will inevitably help to create equality of opportunity for its citizens.

The thesis that Quebec must become independent in order for the French culture to survive in that province has become popular with Quebecers and those Frenchmen who are overly concerned with preserving the French language and culture in America. What is the present situation? That brings me to my second theme.

First, we must locate the problem in its proper context. In a North American continent inhabited by 240 million Anglophones, the French language and culture are constantly being challenged, and we Francophones cannot deny that it is difficult to resist this pressure. Of course, French is becoming more widespread across Canada because of the federal government's efforts, but this is also happening because of the vitality of the language itself and the new pride Canadians feel in their linguistic richness which makes their country culturally diverse and distinguishes them from their neighbours to the south.

Culturally speaking, Canadian federalism is an admirable system of mutually reinforcing support. Quebec makes an essential contribution to Canada's national identity and thus encourages English-speaking Canada to develop and distinguish itself from the United States. In turn, English-speaking Canada serves as a buffer between Quebec and the overwhelming influence of the United States. I have always been surprised to hear pessimists and defeatists speak of Quebec's cultural "suffocation" when, at the same time, some people in English Canada talk about a French "invasion" from St. John's, Newfoundland, to Vancouver, British Columbia. If this is the case, then Quebecers can hardly be suffocating!

What is the reason for this "survival" if I may employ this euphemism to describe the resounding affirmation of the French culture that has taken place in Quebec? Insofar as the use of the French language and culture is concerned, Quebec has always enjoyed complete liberty. The Constitution gives it full jurisdiction over education and allows it to pass legislation in many related areas.

As an aside, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that under the Constitution Canada's provinces have full or partial jurisdiction over areas such as natural resources, social policy, municipal affairs, agriculture and the administration of