

partial secession, will still say 'yes' when they go to the polling booth on May 20. How are we to interpret this paradox? An eminent Quebec political scientist has just explained his position publicly. He does not believe in the secessionist proposal. He rejects sovereignty-association. But he wants a renewed federalism according to another formula. He is afraid that by voting 'no' he would be endorsing the *status quo*. He will therefore vote 'yes', but only in order to give the federal authorities and the English-speaking provinces a shock sufficient to set in motion serious negotiations toward a radical renewal of Canadian institutions. He will not be the only one. I know some labour militants, former colleagues from the time when I myself was a union worker, who will vote 'yes' even though they want to stay in Canada. "It's simple, one of them said to me. "Now that we're into the ultimate blackmail, we'll keep on rolling. Otherwise, we would lose all negotiating power. But you'll see. Everything will work out." Let me add that this worker voted for Mr. Trudeau in the last federal elections, as did 68.3 per cent of the Quebecers who voted that day. Neither his attitude nor that of the political scientist I mentioned earlier, obeys the strictest rule of Cartesian logic, and I have a thousand reservations about these positions. But they are a fact which must be taken into consideration.

If there were a victory of the 'yes' side, it would certainly not be devoid of meaning. It would even have a number of meanings, as can already be observed. And if the 'no' side won the day, it would represent a refusal of sovereignty-association but certainly not an endorsement of the *status quo*.

Doubtless either verdict, despite its ambiguity, will be in line with a movement that is either secessionist or federalist. But neither verdict will be conclusive.

One thing we can predict with certainty is that Canadian political life is in no danger of falling back into the lethargy that men and women of my generation complained about bitterly when we were 20.