

Let me offer some observations that might stimulate that process.

In the 1980 referendum in Quebec, the crucial question asked by individual Quebecers was "Why should I leave Canada?".

But before last week's meetings on Meech Lake, a more common question was: "Why should I stay in Canada?".

Those different questions reflect three realities that have changed.

The first is an exciting and positive change; it is the assertion of French-Canadian confidence and pride, the reality that in so many walks of life Quebec is not just distinct, but distinguished. It is an achievement which speaks to Quebec's accomplishments not in comparison to the rest of Canada but to the rest of the world.

Whether it is in business or the arts or the professions, the Quebec achievement is undeniable. Denis Arcand's films have been twice nominated for Best Foreign Film by the Academy Awards. Anne Hébert has won one of the premiere international literary awards. Le Cirque du Soleil draws SRO audiences and rave reviews on Broadway and in Los Angeles.

And in business, Bernard Lamarre of Lavalin has won a contract to build Bangkok's subway system. Laurent Beaudoin of Bombardier has won a contract to rebuild New York City's train system and a billion dollar contract to construct the European Airbus. The Power Corporation, Caisses Populaires Desjardins and Papiers Cascades are now major corporate players, not just in Quebec, and not just in Canada, but throughout this continent and around the world.

In a Canadian society which is preoccupied with calling itself "world class", these multiple achievements by Quebec stand on their own, more eloquent than any politician's rhetoric or any poet's dreams.

That is one reality, a reality which is worthy of praise and pride. But there is a second reality. And that is the new ugliness towards Quebec, symbolized by that bitter minority in Brockville wiping their feet on the Fleur de Lys. That second reality is disturbing both for what it is and for the false signal to Quebec that this is a national trend and not just an isolated spasm.

And there is a third reality, much less celebrated, but of even greater concern. And that is the decline in pride and identity in what we loosely call "English Canada".

Let me put that in the context of my own province of Alberta. And let me put aside, for a moment, the fact that this Government implemented an agenda that responded to what Albertans said they wanted - an end to FIRA; an end to the National Energy Program; the privatization of PetroCanada; fairer freight rates; and a Free Trade Agreement, to mention only a few. Put aside