

publications, reports and studies of various kinds is now a reality. The possibility for tens of thousands of Francophone public servants to work in their own language, where they once had to adopt English as their language of work is not an illusion. Nor is the promotion of thousands of Francophones to positions to which, until now, they had no access. A crushing failure? As the saying goes, give a dog a bad name and hang him. If politics has taught me anything, it is that in that art, all success is relative.

These, then, are a few reasons why many Quebecers have serious doubts about the advisability of saying "yes" to sovereignty-association. And these are not the only reasons. I must mention the one that impresses me personally more than all the others -- the danger of breaking the Canadian union, in face of the attraction of such a powerful neighbour. Would a politically isolated Quebec have any chance of resisting eventual assimilation by the United States, even if it remained within the Canadian economic entity? I am not the only one to believe that the secession of Quebec would bring a breaking up of Canada, not into two but into three or four pieces each of which would sooner or later find itself in the American union. This is of course not the worst thing that could happen to a people. But in my opinion, our French-speaking community would lose every chance, not only of developing but of surviving culturally, in such an adventure.

However, let us return to the referendum. It is already well known, because they are not embarrassed to admit it, that many federalists who are opposed to any total or 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 rules of Cartesian logic, and I have a thousand reservations about these positions. But they are a fact which must be taken into consideration.