

the external perspective, this task has certainly been completed. The problems lie with the internal ramifications of statehood. There is no doubt that these issues have still to be worked out: jokes abound about the irony of *free trade* in the Americas in the face of inter-provincial boundaries to the movement of certain goods. The MacDonald Royal Commission of the 1980s was simply the latest self-reflexive exercise in the ongoing saga of becoming a country. And, while this work has proceeded, it appears that our notion of what we want or expect from that country has changed radically. All of this challenges the image we present to the world, and the image we wish to have of ourselves.

With these preliminary observations in mind, let us proceed to an examination of specific ideas and concepts as they emerged, session by session, and to consider lessons/recommendations for Canada.³

New Opportunities/Old Problems

The statements made in the opening session of the Conference are indicative of the complex nature of border interaction and the inadequacy of simplistic definitions of border functions. The popular viewpoint that state boundaries are containers or barriers, permanently fixed by geopolitical and military objectives, and that governments must "hold the line", is based upon ideas that are not only out-moded, but were probably never particularly accurate. Borders in the real world vary from "closed" to totally "open", and represent a broad spectrum in which the real issues are legal, geographical, historical and social forces acting in concert with the pressures on the boundary from people, goods, capital and ideas. Barrier properties or borders change over time, and are different from area to area.

Given these realities, the strategic concern for decision-makers, legislators and scholars is how to restructure policies surrounding border issues to better accommodate the demands of globalisation and the concerns of national sovereignty. This is not an easy task. Canadians, like Americans and Europeans, are concerned with the potential threat of open borders, de-territorialised states and loss of national sovereignty. Yet, as Gerald Blake⁴ observed, as a general rule, accessible borders are usually stress-free borders, maintained by

³ In the following sections of the paper the affiliations of each speaker will be given in the appropriate footnote, together with the title of her/his paper as it will appear in the edited version of the proceedings. We should also acknowledge that we have drawn on papers and discussion, we hope accurately, for our commentary, and must therefore accept ultimate responsibility for views expressed herein.

⁴ *The World Political Map: Are the Colors Fading or is our Vision Impaired?*
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