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of confederal cohabitation with our Anglophone compatriots as an impoverished people — quite the contrary. The White Paper does stress that the situation we find ourselves in is not the result of "some political system". It follows nonetheless from this description that Canadian federalism, despite its faults, has not prevented Quebecers from developing their culture and their economy. That is probably what is making half of them (perhaps more — we will know on May 21) hesitate over the venture being proposed to them.

They know from personal experience that the Canadian federal system is one of the most decentralized in the world and that Quebec enjoys a great deal of autonomy. The government of the province has exclusive powers in some very important areas: it is master in its own house in the area of education, is sole administrator of justice in its own territory, exploits its vast natural resources as it sees fit, has its own police force, is free to raise any kind of loan where it wishes and how it wishes in Canada or abroad without even notifying the Federal Government, legislates in the area of language, and has a great deal of authority, often the lion's share, in social security and urban development. With the exception of national defence and foreign affairs, there are hardly any areas from which it is excluded. As far as foreign affairs are concerned, it does have general delegations in several countries — France, for example — and is a member of the principal organization of *La Francophonie internationale*, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation, as a participating government.

It is therefore not, as people in other countries often tend to believe, an ostracized, powerless Francophone community, paralyzed in its development by an oppressive system and unitary institutions which deny it all right to be different, to use an expression in vogue with those who advocate sovereignty. Certain minorities in the Anglophone provinces are probably right in reproaching their provincial governments for not complying with their cultural aspirations. However, it is by virtue of the same exclusive powers which Quebec enjoys that some governments refuse their French-speaking communities certain rights.

It is obvious that there are serious reasons for discontent, since we are now facing a crisis situation. However, a very large number of Quebecers still believe that it would be easier to find the solutions to their problems under renewed federalism than it would be if the proposed secession were to occur.

They reject, for example, the discontinuance of the Federal Government, in which Quebec is very well represented. It is a well-known fact that Canada's Francophone community scored some important points during the past decade as it became aware of its political power. The federal authorities were the first, ahead even of Quebec itself, to pass language legislation to protect and spread the French language throughout Canada. I know that certain commentators in Canada and even in France are quick to say that the official languages policy initiated by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1969 has ended in failure. Many examples can probably be cited in support of that conclusion. The Canadian Government itself, far from hiding the problems, reports on any failures. It was aware from the beginning that its language policy would meet with a great deal of resistance because it constituted a real revolution for English-speaking Canadians and its application would take years to

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