

French-language group live within the province of Quebec and the bulk of the remainder are in New Brunswick and Ontario. The country is also multicultural : 44.6 per cent of the population is of British origin, 28.7 per cent of French origin and the remaining 26.7 per cent is of other ethnic origins.

Quebec has the most pressing cultural demands. In the last 15 years its *Francophones* have become increasingly vocal about the erosion of their language and culture. Many believe their distinctive character will survive only if their provincial government takes strong initiatives in reforming social structures and promoting economic changes.

In 1968, various nationalist groups in Quebec united in a new provincial party, the Parti Québécois, born as an expression of the desire to preserve their language and culture. In the 1976 provincial election, the Parti Québécois campaigned on a platform of government reform and promised not separation but a provincial referendum within the next few years that would give Quebecers an oppor-

tunity to express their views on "sovereignty-association" with Canada.

The Parti Québécois government has taken bold steps to assert Quebec's distinctive character. The Federal Government has moved as well. In 1977, it established a task force of prominent Canadians to cross the country and encourage dialogue and expression of ideas about Canadian unity. The Government continued to increase opportunities for bilingual Canadians in the federal bureaucracy and it proposed a federal referendum to allow Canadians to express their views on questions about Confederation. However, the basic issues continued to centre on the sharing of the public purse and power. The complexity and scope of this problem requires some background knowledge of the Canadian Constitution.