

"Since 1968 Prime Minister Trudeau has suggested more constitutional changes than all the Canadian prime ministers of the previous 100 years put together. Nevertheless, it is important for us to present proposals which will indicate to Canadians, particularly those in Quebec, that the Federal Government is flexible, that we are ready to suggest or study major changes in the Canadian Constitution, and that we are ready to negotiate everything, provided that it is within a federal system. We have simply made two conditions. First, any new Canadian Constitution must include a human rights charter.... Secondly...a prerequisite for any discussions is that we will continue to use the federal form of government. This means that there will still be a federal parliament with real powers and provincial parliaments with real powers, and there will be a division of powers between the federal and provincial governments.... I think that in Canada we should try to develop a federal system whose general provisions would be the same for all provinces, but which would be sufficiently flexible to allow certain provinces to decide whether or not they wish to exercise these powers themselves."

Marc Lalonde, December 2, 1977

tion of Shawinigan Water and Power — not in principle but because he thought that Quebec should make better use of its money. René spoke, of course, of the symbol it would be for a French Canadian and so forth, and Pierre said, 'Oh well, if you feel this way — I'm not interested in symbols.' He just laughed."

Lévesque won the debate and his party won the next election with the help of a slogan — "Maîtres chez nous", "Masters in our own house". The power companies became Hydro Quebec, a public corporation.

By 1964, the house of French-speaking Canada was badly divided. Should Quebec separate? Lévesque: "I think it's not a bad comparison to say it is like a couple — if they can stand each other in a double bed, it's wonderful.... If they can't they should go to twin beds...and if they can't stand that they should go to separate rooms, and then, well, we know that legally if even that isn't good, it is much better to separate than to try to hold on to something which makes both parties uncomfortable and makes the kids more unhappy."

Was he then a separatist? No. Not yet. But "I could become convinced."

In the fall of 1965, Trudeau, Marchand and Pelletier ran for office too. They picked the federal parliament. Trudeau became a member from Mount Royal in Montreal and, within 18 months, Prime Minister Pearson's Minister of Justice. Trudeau: "We think that the trend towards separation in Quebec has been reversed. We feel that now the people in Quebec are getting more and more interested in federal politics and we think the show is on the road."

In Quebec Lévesque lost an election,

decided he favoured separation and walked out of the Liberal Party convention when it refused to agree. Only 50 of 1,500 convention delegates went with him.

Lévesque's career seemed at a low; Trudeau's was hitting a new high. He introduced his first important piece of legislation, a new divorce bill, and gave the country a catch phrase, "The state has no business in the bedrooms of the nation."



Claude Ryan (left), often identified as Quebec's first intellectual citizen and occasionally as the "Pope of Saint Sacrement Street", was recently chosen as the new leader of the province's Liberal Party, and he represents a third force in the great debate. He is a federalist, although his definition of federalism is not the same as Prime Minister Trudeau's (right). He advocates a new Canadian Constitution and a redivision of powers that would give all provinces greater flexibility of choice. Mr. Ryan, 53, recently resigned as the editor of *Le Devoir*, a small but influential Montreal newspaper. His first direct confrontation with Lévesque may be during the referendum expected next year.

Prime Minister Pearson announced his impending resignation but favoured no successor. Trudeau went off on a vacation in Tahiti. He returned, hesitated, and decided to run. He won on the fourth ballot, becoming the Liberal Party leader and, shortly thereafter, the Prime Minister. Meanwhile, Lévesque's movement, which now had 1,200 members, held its first convention. Lévesque, the moderate, prevailed. He carried a resolution that guaranteed the rights of English-speaking Quebecers.

But violence came. Trudeau planned to end his first campaign in Montreal at the parade honouring Jean Baptiste, Quebec's patron saint. Pierre Bourgeault led the radical separatists in planned turmoil. Rocks flew and blood flowed, but Trudeau remained on the reviewing stand although others fled. Three days later he won a clear election majority, the first in ten years. Lévesque denounced Bourgeault and formed the Parti Québécois.

The great Quebec crisis came in October 1970. The Front de Libération du Québec kidnapped James Cross and killed Pierre Laporte. It could have been the end of the separatists. It was not, though it was the end of the FLQ and kidnapping. Lévesque ran in the 1973 Quebec election on an outright platform of separation. His party got 30 per cent of the vote but only six of 110 seats.

A year earlier Trudeau had won an election, but not a majority. With the support of the New Democrats, the Liberals survived. He ran again in 1974 and got a safe margin.

Lévesque ran again in 1976 and profited from experience. He promised government reform at once, and a referendum on separation within five years. He got 41 per cent of the vote and 71 of the 110 seats.

Referendum

Premier Lévesque has promised to call a referendum on the separation of Quebec, perhaps next year. The wording of the question has not been set. It will probably proffer a sovereign Quebec maintaining mutually beneficial ties with Canada. The alternative would be a continuation of confederation, though not probably of the *status quo*. Within the broad alternatives there is room for many variations of autonomy and interdependence.