

Quebec and the French language in the country; a progression which they acknowledged had taken many years.

While most agreed that national unity had strengthened of late, participants were somewhat more guarded in discussing the future. Many appeared to hold the view that regional tensions had not vanished but were merely in suspension pending economic and political developments which, it was felt, could result in their resurfacing.

B. Relations with the United States

Most participants seemed relatively unaware or unconvinced that a significant deterioration in Canada-U.S. relations had occurred over the past few years. While many acknowledged that it seemed apparent that the Mulroney government was determined and likely to foster closer relations with the Reagan administration, there was little understanding or awareness of the irritants between the two countries. A few Toronto participants mentioned the disagreements on the acid rain issue, some in Vancouver mentioned fishing and lumber tariff disputes, but the predominant mood appeared to be that these problems were typical of those which regularly and unavoidably surfaced between two such close neighbours.

When asked to assess the costs and benefits of a closer relationship with the United States, there was no evidence that views had altered dramatically in recent times. Participants were generally aware that we are economically dependent on a good trading relationship with the United States, but that we must remain vigilant in protecting our economic interests where they are in conflict with those of the Americans.