

We started with Meech. Now we have McKenna. I think the formula of Meech-McKenna-Manitoba could turn this crisis into a real step forward for Canada. One way or the other, Manitoba can make the difference.

Finally, on this point, let me deal with the argument that, before Manitoba takes an initiative, Quebec must move some more. While I believe that all Provinces will have to move if there is to be real progress, I share Roland Penner's view that the next move is up to Manitoba.

First, as I will argue in a minute, I believe that constitutional reform is at least as important to Western Canada as it is to Quebec, and that solving the present constitutional deadlock is the only way we can move on to the reforms this region wants.

But, I also think it important to recognize that the only reason we have the possibility of progress now is that Quebec has already moved. Quebec was shut out in 1982. Pierre Trudeau and the other Premiers made a deal, and did not tell the Premier of Quebec. He read about it the next morning in the newspapers. That exclusion created deep resentment in Quebec, as it would have created resentment here had Manitoba been the Province that was shut out. Quebecers realized that their exclusion in 1982 created a major problem for the rest of the country - a problem the rest of the country wanted resolved. A constitution does not work if one Province, representing almost 25 per cent of Canada's population, is not part of the process. So, some Quebecers wanted that Province to set a very high price before they would agree to make the Canadian Constitution work again. That is why the Parti Québécois put forward twenty-two proposals.

During the 1985 Provincial election in Quebec, M. Bourassa proposed a more moderate approach. It set forth five principles which were approved first, by the voters of Quebec, and then, in Edmonton in 1986, as a basis for negotiation, by all the Premiers of Canada. The Honourable Jack Pickersgill, a Manitoban who became one of the most powerful Liberals of our history, said of this process: "If Quebec is rebuffed, if this accord becomes discord, and the opportunity is lost to get the acquiescence of the constitutional authorities in Quebec, my guess is that it probably will not arise again for another generation and never again on such reasonable terms". Most students of the Canadian Constitution agree. So Quebec has already moved.

Part of the concern in Manitoba, of course, focusses on actions by Quebec that have nothing to do with Meech Lake - the passage of the sign law and the use of the notwithstanding clause. I understand that concern, as I understand the concern in Quebec about actions taken by other provinces in fields that also have nothing to do with Meech Lake. But the Quebec sign law happened without Meech Lake. So did the use of the notwithstanding clause, by Quebec, and for that matter by Saskatchewan.