

THIS ABILITY TO EMPLOY CREATIVE PRAGMATISM MUST BE WEIGHED AGAINST THE LIKELY EFFECTIVENESS OF VARIOUS CURRENT PROPOSALS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND STRUCTURAL CHANGES. CENTRAL TO MOST OF THESE, AS IT ALWAYS HAS BEEN, IS THE ISSUE OF POWER-SHARING BETWEEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE PROVINCES. THERE IS A NEED FOR CLARITY ALSO ON HOW MUCH DIVERSITY IN REGIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES CANADIAN FEDERALISM CAN TOLERATE BEFORE IT BECOMES IRRETRIEVABLY FRAGMENTED.

BOTH OUR HISTORY AND PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES MAKE IT EASY TO UNDERSTAND WHY PROVINCIAL LEADERS IN BOTH GOOD AND BAD FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WANT MORE FREEDOM TO HANDLE THEIR OWN AFFAIRS. BUT, WHILE THERE IS SOME LOGIC IN BRINGING DECISION-MAKING CLOSER TO THOSE AFFECTED, THIS WILL NOT, OF ITSELF, REMOVE THE BASIC CAUSES OF OUR MOST INTRACTABLE DIFFICULTIES. THE MAIN SOURCES OF REGIONAL DISPARITY LIE ELSEWHERE AND A MORE LOCALIZED APPROACH COULD PRODUCE FRAGMENTED, CONTRADICTORY PROVINCIAL POLICIES. CHANGES THAT SHARPEN REGIONAL DIFFERENCES RUN THE RISK OF DIMINISHING OUR SENSE OF NATIONHOOD STILL FURTHER.