

tional government. Moreover, I believe that Canadians outside of Quebec still look to the national government to play a lead role on national unity matters. This is not to suggest that the provinces should be passive or that Ottawa should move unilaterally, without advance notice and consultation with the premiers. Further, certain provinces, particularly Ontario, have a key role to play in the process. Nevertheless, I believe strongly that the first move in any new initiative must come from Ottawa.

It goes without saying that governments should not take up the suggestion made by Premier Wells and others to establish some form of "constituent assembly." A constituent assembly would have to be elected for it to be legitimate. But what would give these elected representatives any greater legitimacy or right to make decisions than governments, which are themselves elected? Who would define the mandate, membership, or terms of reference for such a body? Would there be special representation or "set asides" for particular groups, such as aboriginals, women, racial minorities, francophones outside Quebec, anglophones in Quebec, the disabled, trade unions, and a host of other interest groups? These questions may seem to be quibbling over details, but any responsible government contemplating such a proposal had better have answers to all of them before it proceeds.

More fundamentally, even if a legitimate constituent assembly could be established, and even if such a body could come to some "agreement" as to the terms of a revised constitution, the result would be a broadening rather than a narrowing of the agenda. The country would be presented with a comprehensive rewrite of the entire

constitution, just as was attempted in Charlottetown. As in Charlottetown, the concerns of Quebec would likely be buried or inadequately represented in both the process and the outcome. The danger is that Canada would be presented with a constitution written by and for special interests. Is it plausible to imagine that this would bring constitutional peace to the country? Surely the answer to such a question is self-evident.

6. Take the path of least constitutional resistance.

This principle suggests that non-constitutional options should be preferred over constitutional ones. Moreover, in the event that a constitutional amendment must be proceeded with, amendments under the less-restrictive 7/50 formula should be preferred over those requiring unanimity. This principle also reflects my earlier suggestion that constitutional amendments should be treated as separate "stand-alone" items rather than as a single package because the chances of securing the necessary consent for a limited, narrow amendment are significantly higher.

These six principles provide a general framework to guide the federal response in the months ahead. What remains is to define, in concrete terms, the nature of the federal initiatives that should be undertaken in the areas of distinct society, veto and devolution of powers. That task, as well as the consideration of how Canada ought to prepare for the next referendum, will be the subject of a future *Canada Watch* column. ❖

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AN EXEMPLARY REFERENDUM

BY PIERRE DROUILLY

With such a small majority for the No forces (52,448 votes), the sovereigntists might be tempted to blame the anglophones, the francophone voters of the Outaouais, the older voters, and the First Nations who voted against them. But the results of the referendum need to be examined more carefully to discover the social base of the "yes" and "no" votes.

THE ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION

The electoral participation in the Quebec referendum was exceptionally high. With 93.5 percent of voters going to the polls, this referendum set a record for Quebec and even for Canada. Even the 1980 referendum — which was at the time a historical record since Confederation — attracted only 85.6 percent of voters.

A closer look at the 1995 referendum reveals that out of 125 ridings, the participation exceeded 95 percent in 23 ridings and was lower than 90 percent in only 5 ridings. A statistical analysis shows that there is no significant correlation between the rate of participation and the linguistic profile of the ridings. The differences are more likely to be linked to the social stratification of the ridings. As usual, the suburban voters participated more (95.2 percent around Montreal) than the voters in the peripheral areas of Montreal (89.8 percent in northwestern Montreal, 90.2 percent in Bas-Saint-Laurent/Gaspé-Côte Nord, and 92.7 percent in Saguenay/Lac-Saint-Jean). In every riding, though, the 1995 rate of participation exceeded that of 1980. Such a strong participation could have been foreseen. Indeed, the number of registered voters was

higher than last year by 2,000. As well, a large number of people (300,000) voted in advance.

THE PROGRESSION OF THE SOVEREIGNTIST MOVEMENT

The number of registered voters better translates the actual level of support while it allows comparisons that are not based on the level of participation. With the support of 49.4 per-

A closer look at the "yes" votes among the francophones allows an interesting sociological analysis of the electoral habits of the Quebec francophone electors.

cent of the registered voters, the No forces actually did worse in 1995 than in 1980, when they relied on 50.1 percent of the registered voters. On the other hand, the sovereigntist forces got the support of 45.4 percent of the registered voters compared with 34.0 percent in 1980. Another comparison of figures reveals that at Charlottetown in 1992, the No side gained the support of 45.9 percent of the registered voters (and 56.7 percent of the valid votes). Moreover, compared with the elections of 1981, 1993, and 1994, the sovereigntist movement achieved its second best score. Indeed, 40.2 percent of the registered electorate voted for the Parti québécois in 1981, while 35.8 percent voted for the Bloc qué-

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bécois in 1993 and for the PQ in 1994. There is a strong similarity between the 1995 and the 1980 results (correlation of .90) as well as between the 1995 and 1992 results (correlation of .98). The 1995 results for the Yes forces are well correlated with the 1994 score of the Parti québécois (.92). Similarly, the 1995 score of the No forces shows a strong correlation with the results obtained by the Liberal Party in the 1994 election (.90).

THE LINGUISTIC VOTES

According to every poll, a majority of francophones were going to vote "yes," while the non-francophones would massively support the No side. The polls were right.

A spectral analysis of the referendum outcome shows that about 60 percent of the francophones voted "yes" and that less than 5 percent of the

non-francophones supported the Yes forces, as it was foreseen in the polls. On that basis, we have looked at the distribution of the "yes" votes in each riding and region appearing in the attached tables.

If the ridings are grouped according to their francophone population, it appears that the "yes" votes decrease where the number of francophones decrease (Table 1). In the ridings where the francophones make up more than 50 percent of the population, the "yes" votes represent about 60 percent of the total results. The linguistic profile of every riding acts as a screen in the analysis. Indeed, the weaker results of the Yes forces are to be explained by the votes of the non-francophone electors rather than by the bad performance of the francophone voters. In the Island of Montreal, the Yes forces scored only

34.5 percent. However, 61.3 percent of the francophone Montrealers voted "yes" and 66.7 percent of the francophones in the PQ ridings of

Among the factors accounting for the variable scores of the Yes forces, the linguistic factor strongly explains the division of the votes.

eastern Montreal supported the Yes forces. Those figures are well above the Quebec average of 60 percent support for the Yes side (Table 2).

THE FRANCOPHONE VOTES

A closer look at the "yes" votes among the francophones allows an interesting sociological anal-

ysis of the electoral habits of the Quebec francophone electors.

The data given in Table 2 clearly reveal the more urban and even metropolitan character of the sovereigntist vote. In eastern Montreal, 66.7 percent of the francophones voted "yes"; in the Montreal suburbs, the Yes forces gained 65.2 percent of the francophone votes. However, in western Montreal, and especially in the most bourgeois ridings of western Montreal, the Yes supporters were in the minority in 17 ridings. In 8 of these 17 ridings (Acadie, D'Arcy McGee, Jacques Cartier, Mont Royal, Nelligan, Robert Baldwin, Saint Laurent, and Westmount-Saint Louis), only 42.2 percent of francophones voted "yes."

The percentage of francophone "yes" voters were lower in the metropolitan area of Quebec City (57 percent) as well as

TABLE 1 RESULTS OF THE REFERENDUM ACCORDING TO THE PERCENTAGE OF FRANCOPHONES

Francophones in riding	Ridings	Voters	Participation	"Yes" votes	Francophones	Francophone "yes" votes
90%+	69	2,733,666	93.0%	57.7%	96.4%	59.8%
80-90%	21	890,420	94.1%	52.1%	86.1%	60.5%
50-80%	23	927,773	93.7%	41.1%	67.3%	61.1%
Less than 50%	12	535,121	94.6%	17.6%	35.7%	49.3%
Total Quebec	125	5,086,980	93.5%	49.4%	82.4%	60.0%

TABLE 2 RESULTS OF THE REFERENDUM ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF RIDING

Type of riding	Ridings	Voters	Participation	"Yes" votes	Francophones	Francophone "yes" votes
Western Montreal	15	665,551	94.3%	22.1%	41.9%	52.6%
Eastern Montreal	12	493,583	93.9%	55.3%	83.0%	66.7%
Northeaster periphery of Montreal	16	721,360	95.2%	56.3%	86.4%	65.2%
Quebec City	11	501,383	93.8%	55.1%	96.6%	57.0%
Highly urban	28	1,184,547	93.0%	55.6%	93.5%	59.5%
Highly rural	35	1,211,799	92.1%	52.7%	92.5%	56.9%
Total Quebec	125	5,086,980	93.5%	49.4%	82.4%	60.0%

TABLE 3 RESULTS OF THE REFERENDUM ACCORDING TO REGION

Region	Ridings	Voters	Participation	"Yes" votes	Francophones	Francophone "yes" votes
Bas St-Laurent-Gaspé-Côte-Nord	10	303,242	90.2%	60.3%	94.0%	64.2%
Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean	5	206,300	92.7%	69.6%	98.8%	70.4%
Quebec	11	480,958	93.5%	54.4%	96.6%	56.3%
Chaudière-Appalaches	8	287,487	92.2%	50.7%	98.8%	51.3%
Mauricie-Bois-Francs	8	316,526	93.0%	57.2%	98.0%	58.3%
Estrie	8	315,120	93.4%	49.6%	89.4%	55.5%
Montérégie-Rive-Sud	18	797,679	94.7%	53.7%	86.5%	62.2%
Laurentides-Lanaudière	13	567,581	93.8%	61.6%	93.6%	65.8%
Outaouais	5	214,362	93.8%	27.5%	81.1%	33.8%
Nord-Ouest	4	129,834	89.8%	55.8%	87.4%	63.9%
Laval	5	236,117	95.3%	46.7%	78.4%	59.6%
Île-de-Montréal	30	1,231,774	93.9%	34.5%	56.3%	61.3%
Total Quebec	125	5,086,980	93.5%	49.4%	82.4%	60.0%

in the urban or strongly urban ridings (59.5 percent) or in the mostly rural ridings (56.9 percent). In the area of Quebec City, the percentage of "yes" voters was lower than expected. The political tension between the public sector employees and the PQ government is one of the many reasons that may account for this fact.

In any case, francophones in the area of Quebec were more moderate Yes supporters, with 58.3 percent of "yes" votes in Mauricie-Bois-Francs and 55.5 percent in Estrie. Let us compare these figures with the percentages of "yes" votes in Saguenay/Lac Saint-Jean (70.4 percent) and the northwestern regions (63.9 percent) as well as in Bas-Saint-Laurent/Gaspé (64.2 percent), Montérégie-Rive Sud (62.2 percent), and the Laurentides-Lanaudière (64.2 percent). The regions with the lowest percentages of francophone "yes" voters were Chaudière-Appalaches (51.3 percent) and the Outaouais (33.8 percent). The No forces won in the Beauce-Nord and

Beauce-Sud, Bellechasse, and Montmagny-L'Islet. The PQ's position has been weak in the Outaouais and Beauce for 25 years.

BACK TO THE LINGUISTIC VOTE

Among the factors accounting for the variable scores of the Yes forces, the linguistic factor strongly explains the division of the votes. The Yes forces won in 80 ridings, but they gained the majority of the francophone votes in 108 out of 125 ridings. The No forces won 17 francophone ridings (8 in western Montreal, 5 in Outaouais, and 4 in Beauce). But the final result was 50-50 for the No forces despite a 60 percent majority of francophone Yes supporters and at most 5 percent of non-francophone "yes" voters. The almost homogeneous vote of the minority seems to have played against a strong support for the Yes side among the majority. However, it may not sound politically correct to underline this because all votes are equal in a democratic society.

The Yes forces have been

defeated. No one would deny it. Sociologically speaking, the problem is not that the minority vote has prevented the expression of the majority vote. Even if the Yes forces had won, the unanimous vote of the non-francophones against the sovereigntist project would have presented an obstacle. In 1992, when the Charlottetown Accord was rejected by 56.7 percent of votes — with two-thirds of francophone votes — the anglophones of Quebec supported the accord although a majority of the anglophones from the rest of Canada voted against the agreement.

Anyone is, of course, free to vote in whatever fashion. However, when almost one million people express the same opinion in a vote, one may wonder about the freedom of choice that these people gave to themselves. A democracy is based on the existence of free and rational individuals who reach decisions after objectively looking at the proposed options. When all the members of a com-

munity vote in the same direction, one cannot help but think that they may have a common political cause, especially when this pattern has been repeating itself for 25 years in 10 different elections.

With such a unanimous vote, the non-francophone voters are expressing a systematic and obstinate rejection of francophone Quebec. We have never called this racism. It must, however, be dealt with because it is the source of the ethnic character of the division between francophones and non-francophones.

Despite the results of the referendum, the sovereigntists have to overcome their bitterness and offer the allophones and anglophones of Quebec a role in the building of a country. Without them, Quebec would not be what it is. ❁

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