

means acting in the ROC's own self-interest, rather than in the interests of Quebec. In particular, the ROC will insist that Quebec can secede only on the basis of terms and conditions that are acceptable to both parties—rather than through a unilateral declaration of independence by Quebec (as Mr. Parizeau's draft bill contemplates). Far from being "irrational," this insistence on joint terms and conditions is simply a natural response to the aggressive negotiating position taken by Premier Parizeau in the draft sovereignty bill.

As for the suggestion that raising this argument is somehow "undemocratic," surely democracy requires that all Canadians (including those

in Quebec) have a right to know what is really at stake in the forthcoming referendum. Otherwise, citizens are left to make a fundamental choice about their future without a clear understanding of the likely consequences. In fact, it is those who seek to suppress a full and open debate through charges of "economic terrorism" who are the real elitists, since they assume that ordinary citizens will be incapable of making an informed judgment if they are exposed to arguments on both sides of the issue.

I remain convinced that all Canadians have an obligation to debate openly the real costs and consequences of Quebec separation. But this, of course, cannot be the whole

debate. We also need to respond to Quebec's legitimate aspirations—as well as those of other provinces—by providing greater room in our federation for provincial autonomy within areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction. The fiscal pressures facing the federal government seem to make such an accommodation inevitable, which is a fortunate coincidence. It is also a reason for assuming that, in the end, cooler heads will, indeed, prevail in Quebec City as well as in Ottawa in this debate.

*Patrick Monahan is an Associate Professor at Osgoode Hall Law School.*



## THE NEW KINGMAKERS

by Daniel Latouche

Doomsday scenarios, such as Patrick Monahan's *Cooler Heads Shall Prevail*, are no strangers to the Canadian way of doing things. In fact, the country was founded following the "mother of all scenarios": a possible invasion by a restless post-Civil War America. We have had similar periods of intense scenario-making in recent years: at the time of the FLQ crisis, when the Parti québécois first took power in 1976; during the free trade debate of the late 1980s; and, more recently, following the Meech debacle. We are now witnessing the fifth wave of cataclysmic scenario writing.

On the whole, the intellectual legitimacy and the scientific credibility of these scenarios has been somewhat limited and all indications are that the present vintage of "what-if" exercises will not be much better. One of the reasons, of course, is that most scenario makers do not actually believe in their product or even

in the probable occurrence of the triggering event, in this case a "yes" vote in the upcoming Quebec referendum. Their scenarios are to be seen strictly as contributing to the propaganda war as performed by well-intentioned intellectual mercenaries who take quite literally the necessity to "stand on guard for thee."

This is not to say that such exercises are futile; they are actually quite effective as ideological tools, but their main value lies in what they tell us about the country and its own political foundations.

It should be noted that all such scenarios agree that the reason for the coming cataclysm is Quebec and its insistence on remodeling the political configuration of this part of North America. Throughout the analysis, Canada (also known as the "rest of Canada" (ROC)) is usually presented as a somewhat tranquil, a bit naive, and always sympathetic

partner who could soon be confronted with a host of demands for which it is not responsible and which are likely to induce irrational reactions. In any case, the ROC is not to be held responsible for any such reactions because Quebec leaves it no choice but to succumb to its fears of the unknown.

While Canada is pictured as the helpless "male" partner, Quebec is seen as the "female" accomplice, one whose own "illogical" behaviour is likely to bring turmoil to the relationship. Quebec, it seems, needs to be told ahead of time that any set of unrealistic demands will not be met, not so much because demands are unfounded, but simply because the "male" partner is not psychologically equipped to deal rationally with them. Such warnings are seen as serving two purposes: first, to bring some sense to the "other" side,

*Continued, see "The New Kingmakers" on page 54.*

*"The New Kingmakers,"*  
continued from page 53.

and second, to convince "your" side that if the worst ever comes, all manner of reactions will be acceptable, for Quebec will have been warned.

For obvious political reasons, Quebec federalists are unlikely to criticize these exercises. At best, they will be rejected as being "unproductive," but in private, most Quebecers will be offended by their incredibly paternalistic and chauvinistic orientation.

Scenarios such as Monahan's are of the "cease and desist" variety, inasmuch as they offer Quebec only one way out—that is, to quit while it's ahead, otherwise the rest of the country cannot be held responsible for what it might be forced to do. Thus, if the worst comes, it will be entirely Quebec's fault and the separatists will only have themselves to blame. No other cure, except for Jacques Parizeau abandoning his futile and dangerous idea, is likely to be considered. For example, English Canadian scenario writers would not even think of suggesting that the rest of the country get its act together and start thinking about the best way out of a potentially disturbing situation. For Patrick Monahan, the state of non-preparation in which Canada now finds itself is to be taken at face value. It is presumed to be the normal state of things in Canada, one in which Canadians and their leaders find themselves most comfortable. Never is it suggested that this state of "non-preparation" is actually the source of the problem and should be changed. Of course, the mere idea that a "yes" vote could be engaged positively and could actually be the starting point of a new Canada is never even considered. Such an anti-climactic scenario is seen as giving comfort to the enemy and rejected as only serv-

ing the interests of the separatists.

This position is not only strategically indefensible, but can also be questioned from a moral and democratic perspective. It is based on the idea that in certain circumstances, democratically elected governments, in this case the federal and the other nine provincial ones, are justified in not preparing themselves for a potentially disturbing situation, lest they are seen as considering this event a likely one. Of course, there is always the possibility that this state of unreadiness is but a mixture of talk and posturing, in which case these governments are clearly lying, a fact that does not augur well for the pursuit of a democratic dialogue in

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Canada. Is this, indeed, the Canadian version of the "talk loud and carry a big stick" ideology of our neighbours to the south? But if nothing is being done in our various capitals, this tells us much about the seriousness that guides Canadian governments. Canadian taxpayers, including those living in Quebec—even the separatists ones—are entitled to a better performance from their elected officials. Their *raison d'être* is precisely to think about the unthinkable. To prepare for the obvious is easy enough. We only need newspapers to do so.

One could even argue that by refusing to prepare for the unthinkable, Canadian elected officials are behaving in an unconstitutional manner. Is it not the case that "peace, order, and good government" is the moral foundation on which the Ca-

nadian political order is based? By refusing to consider and prepare for a Yes victory, could we not say that these officials are operating outside the realm of the constitutionally acceptable?

In this country it is clearly unacceptable, as well as illegal, to promote change or, for that matter, any set of political and social ideas through the use of violence. To advocate violence, as the old FLQ once did, clearly puts you outside the boundaries of what a normal democratic society can tolerate. Of course, the Group of Eleven and the scenario helpers are not advocating such extreme measures, but by refusing to state unequivocally that under no circumstances will they tolerate the use of violence or military intervention to "keep Quebec in," are they not laying the ground work for such a course of action?

Is this what Canada is all about? Why are so few raising their voices to affirm that they will have no part in this self-fulfilling undemocratic behaviour? Is such a country worth saving?

*Daniel Latouche is a research professor at the Institut national de la recherche scientifique.* 