of focusing on visiting agents, they gave rise to discourses similar to that promoted by the Quebec government in recent years, and indicated how disoriented New Democrats have become. Citizens in these two provinces should be attentive. If the parallel is genuine, these governments' new emphasis on controls will not be confined to people receiving social assistance.

Alain Noël is Assistant Professor, Département de science politique, Université de Montréal. Quebec Report is a regular feature of Canada Watch.
agreement and NAFTA, which enjoyed strong although not universal support in the west, implicitly urged Canadians to refocus their attention and energies away from the national community to the continental and international economies. Western Canadians have accepted this message with enthusiasm and, as a result, are simply less interested in the evolution of the Canadian federal state.

The survival of Canada, and Quebec's strategic threat to that survival, will not generate the same intense, visceral reaction this time around in the national unity debate. This does not mean that western Canadians do not care, but it also does not mean that they are unlikely to go out of their way to provide a positive or comforting message to Quebec. The danger is that regional indifference may be interpreted as hostility by Quebeckers.

Thus, the challenge for the supporters of the federalist option in Quebec will not be to ward off regional hostility from the west, but to penetrate a growing regional indifference. More specifically, the task will be to bring western Canadians into the debate, and to do so in a positive manner. Neither task will be easy in a region whose mind and heart is increasingly to be found elsewhere.

Roger Gibbins is Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science, University of Calgary. Western Report is a regular feature of Canada Watch.