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Le séminaire convoqué par le *Centre d'études constitutionnelles* en mai dernier a été une excellente occasion de discussion avec des collègues anglophones du "reste du Canada", comme ils se désignaient eux-mêmes, sur nos perceptions respectives de la crise constitutionnelle.

Nos échanges m'ont permis de confirmer mes convictions sur l'impossibilité de réconcilier nos intérêts réciproques: si j'étais une canadienne du "R.O.C.", je ne verrais pas non plus l'utilité de décentraliser la fédération canadienne dans une mesure qui puisse satisfaire les exigences minimales du Québec. Mais comme québécoise, je ne pourrais accepter le minimum de normes nationales qu'exige le maintien à l'échelle canadienne, des programmes qui constituent, pour les citoyens des autres provinces, l'essence même du Canada.

J'ai par ailleurs apprécié la possibilité d'échanger pour la première fois sur ces questions avec un métis et un amérindien. Leur approche nous intéresse tous, quel que soit l'avenir du Canada et du Québec, et j'ai beaucoup appris d'eux aussi bien que de Michael Asch, dont la perspective anthropologique, nouvelle pour moi, me semble extrêmement féconde comme voie de réflexion.

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I found the symposium to be valuable in several respects, but most importantly for two major reasons.

The first was the opportunity to engage in a free-flowing discussion with thoughtful people from Québec. I was struck by the degree to which the two solitudes in Canada still exist, and indeed, have been strengthened. It is too simplistic to blame the failure of Meech Lake completely for our impasse. Certainly the actions of our political leaders contributed to the present situation, especially their willingness to gamble everything on a positive outcome. In reality, Meech Lake crystallized what was already in existence; two largely disparate views of our mutual enterprise, and even more importantly, two contradictory estimates of its worth. The views of the Québec participants forcefully reminded me of how much work is needed if we are to find common views on the future of this country.

The second important outcome of the conference was the clarity with which it elaborated the clash between regional and ideological impulses in the Canadian body

politic. The aspirations of the nationalists in Québec, which invite decentralization of power and control from Ottawa, are in opposition to those on the political left in the rest of Canada, who want to preserve a significant role for the national state. Questions surrounding these apparently irreconcilable goals were left unanswered, leading me to believe that the old alliances of social reformers in Canada and Québec may be at an end. In particular, those outside of Québec who believe that a strong national government is the only protection against absorption of Canada by the United States find themselves in a dilemma. Ironically, many of these same people were supporters of the Parti Québécois and its goals for Québec in the 1970s. Now they find themselves opposing the present nationalists. Such an ideological turn can only help harden views outside of Québec against proposals for decentralization of power. As well, it could facilitate the final achievement of the "business" agenda in Canada, as the left wing in Canada finds itself caught between the equally unpalatable options of promoting Québec sovereignty, or American hegemony.