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NATIONAL AND GLOBAL

PERSPECTIVES

NATIONALES ET MONDIALES



Canadian
BUSINESS
LEADERS
speak



les
chefs
d'entreprise
CANADIENS
s'expriment

BUSINESS COUNCIL ON NATIONAL ISSUES
CONSEIL CANADIEN DES CHEFS D'ENTREPRISE

The challenges and opportunities of the global marketplace are very much on the minds of the member chief executives of the Business Council on National Issues.

This edition of *Perspectives* includes thoughts on risk-taking, on the relative importance of company size and flexibility and on the development of shared values across national boundaries, as well as on the importance of continuing to improve global market access.

Continued success abroad, of course, depends on maintaining a strong home base. Other member chief executives discuss the role of corporate profits in building stronger communities and topics ranging from research and development and technological change to education and skills training. We close this edition by returning to one of Canada's most troubling issues, the unity of our country and the importance of recognizing Quebec's unique characteristics within our federation.

The excerpts in this edition of *Perspectives* are drawn from speeches made between November, 1996, and March, 1997. We hope these comments will spark further discussion of the challenges we face as individuals, as companies and as a country.

Les défis et les opportunités reliés au marché mondial retiennent l'attention des membres du Conseil canadien des chefs d'entreprise. Ce numéro de *Perspectives* contient des réflexions sur la prise de risques, l'importance relative de la taille et de la flexibilité des entreprises, le développement des valeurs communes à travers les frontières nationales, ainsi que l'importance de poursuivre le développement de l'accès aux marchés.

Le succès des entreprises canadiennes à l'étranger dépend bien sûr du maintien de leur position sur le plan domestique. D'autres de nos membres se penchent ainsi sur des sujets comme l'importance des profits des sociétés, la recherche-développement, le changement technologique, l'éducation, la formation professionnelle, ainsi que l'unité canadienne et la reconnaissance des caractéristiques uniques du Québec dans notre fédération.

Les extraits publiés dans ce numéro de *Perspectives* sont tirés de discours donnés par nos membres entre novembre 1996 et mars 1997. Nous espérons que ces réflexions sauront attiser la discussion sur les défis auxquels les individus, les compagnies et le pays doivent faire face.

DAVID STEWART-PATTERSON
EDITOR/RÉDACTEUR



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For whom the profits flow

March 5, 1997

Our strong first quarter results benefited many stakeholders. Governments benefited from income taxes, other taxes and deposit insurance premiums of \$417 million, up nine percent from the first quarter of 1996. Suppliers benefited from our purchases of goods and services of \$390 million, up 25 percent from a year ago. And our 55,000 employees received salaries and benefits of \$828 million, up 23 percent from last year. (...)

In the future, we'll continue to grow through profitable acquisitions, alliances, joint ventures and new start-up initiatives, including new products and services that benefit our customers and meet our return targets. And we will keep our eye on the crucial objectives of cost control and a quality risk profile. Balancing all of these objectives is the key to achieving sustainable growth in profits for our millions of shareholders.

With profit, we will improve what we do for our customers and communities.

With profit, we can launch new products and services and offer the innovative choices, advice and solutions needed in today's networked financial world.

With profit, we can invest in new technologies and new service delivery channels. Royal Direct, with more than one million customers, is one of the fastest growing telephone banking services anywhere. Electronic banking offers customers added convenience, flexibility and control over how and when they shop and at what price. We'll invest more than \$500 million in this critical area alone over the next two years.

With profit, we can continue to hire and train employees to deal with a rapidly changing marketplace and customer expectations. We'll spend \$100 million on training alone this year.

With profit, we can pay competitive salaries, benefits and incentive bonuses to attract and keep the best talent available ... \$2.9 billion last year.

With profit, we can continue to pay taxes. In 1996, we paid \$1.5 billion in income and other taxes and deposit insurance premiums, up 11 percent from 1995. And our employees paid another \$450 million in taxes.

With profit, we can further support job growth in Canada as a major provider and underwriter of loans and investment capital to our clients. We are one of Canada's largest direct employers and we also create thousands of jobs by buying goods and services worth more than \$2 billion. And we support more jobs by spending almost \$150 million on professional services.

With profit, we continue to donate more than any other Canadian company to support community efforts, and our employees have built a tremendous track record as volunteers.

With the new millenium approaching, we are committed to continue our growth, and profitability.

JOHN E. CLEGHORN
ROYAL BANK OF CANADA



Profit for all Canadians

January 21, 1997

I think it is absolutely essential for Canadians to understand how much they succeed, when banks and indeed all financial institutions succeed. It's essential they understand that when banks profit, all Canadians profit. (...)

I am surprised, and increasingly concerned, by the rising tide of criticism that simply does not stand up to objective scrutiny. Consider, if you will, the following facts. The banking industry directly employs over 190,000 Canadians, at a cost in salaries and benefits of \$9 billion. (...)

We also create indirect employment for many thousands more Canadians, through the billions of dollars banks spend on goods and services from suppliers all across Canada -- suppliers who in turn place orders and pay taxes.

We are a major export industry, earning many, many millions of dollars for Canada abroad; in Bank of Montreal's case, almost half our profits are earned outside Canada.

Banks pay very large amounts in taxes that benefit all Canadians. We pay steady and substantial dividends, that flow directly or indirectly to something like one half the population of this country. (...) The Bank of Montreal is now owned by more Canadians than has ever been the case in its history. Our shares work for millions of people, who are themselves working on the shopfloor or on the trawler or in the classroom.

MATTHEW W. BARRETT
BANK OF MONTREAL



Le succès des entreprises et la communauté

le 12 décembre 1996

Le succès des entreprises se répercute sur la communauté de bien des façons, mais surtout par l'emploi. En créant des emplois, les entreprises assurent de la stabilité à des millions de personnes, qui, à leur tour, stimulent l'économie en payant des impôts et en dépensant de l'argent dans leurs communautés. Les entreprises qui marchent bien contribuent aussi à des emplois indirects en faisant des achats auprès de fournisseurs et par leurs immobilisations.

Et puis il y a les impôts des entreprises, un item très important. Le grand public ne se rend sans doute pas compte de l'importance de la contribution des entreprises aux coffres de l'État. (...) Le total fiscal en question englobe les impôts sur le revenu des sociétés, les taxes sur la masse salariale, les taxes foncières, les taxes sur le capital, les taxes d'accise ainsi que les droits de douane sur les produits importés.

Les entreprises prospères doivent aussi être en mesure de s'occuper des pressants besoins sociaux de nos communautés. Un des problèmes majeurs du Canada, c'est le manque de débouchés pour les jeunes diplômés des cégeps et universités. Imasco en est consciente et est devenue récemment membre fondateur d'un programme innovateur appelé Career Edge / Avantage Carrière. Cette initiative du secteur privé permet à des entreprises de commanditer des stages d'internat, d'apprentissage et de mentorat pour les jeunes.

BRIAN M. LEVITT
IMASCO LIMITÉE



The rewards of risk

February 27, 1997

Risk is no longer a four-letter word for us. In fact, we've created a culture that not only doesn't shy away from risk, we embrace it. I'm convinced there's no other way you can become innovative.

And these days, if you're not innovative -- if you're not constantly offering your customers new products and new services, if you're not partnering with them to add new value for both of you -- then you're not taking risks. Innovation, by definition, is risky. (...)

There is no more urgent imperative in today's business environment than the willingness to take a risk.

It has become one of the most critical success factors in growing any enterprise. It brings strength and toughness -- not only to our companies, but to ourselves. But the rewards of risk-taking can only come with three things: One, be clear in your vision. Two, be willing to invest -- whether the investment is in time, money, people, or partnerships. And three, be persistent.

In the past, when we had a more stable, predictable business environment, taking risks was not as necessary. In fact, doing things differently might have been seen as foolish. Now things have changed so dramatically that we have to "fix it before it breaks". In an environment of change, risk taking is the norm ... changing the way we do things must be a way of life for successful companies.

I've looked at different kinds of risk, but it all comes down to this: risk taking is nothing more than bold thinking, and the courage to act upon it. I can't think of better words to express what I mean by risk taking than those of the

playwright George Bernard Shaw. "You see things and say "Why?" But I dream of things that never were and say "Why not?""

I carry these words "Why not?" into my life. Think about carrying them into yours. Your companies and communities will be able to realize their potential more fully. You will be able to make a more productive contribution. And Canada will be a better place for all of us.

DIANE E. MCGARRY
XEROX CANADA LIMITED



Values create opportunity

November 18, 1996

In a multinational company such as Alcan, employees don't always share the same language or citizenship, or even the same region of the world. They do share a culture of values at work and in the community. And the test remains whether we as an organization are bringing economic value to all our stakeholders -- suppliers and customers, shareholders, communities and to society as a whole.

In "The Value Imperative", James McTaggart writes of making value creation a core competence of business. It means pervasive value, value all the way through, value all through the system.

And by value, we mean not only the net worth of a company, but also the intrinsic worth of its products. We mean an organization that enhances the human values of dignity and community.

In the end, it is a culture of values that creates a culture of opportunity.

JACQUES BOUGIE
ALCAN ALUMINIUM LIMITED



Let go of what you cannot keep

November 28, 1996

For some, being global is about being very large. But I am not convinced that big is best. I see the winners of the future as the better players, not the bigger players. Another path to being truly global is through flexibility and adaptability. That path means accessing the markets where and when we have the greatest value to offer. It means keeping open a wide range of options for competing effectively, including global financing and alliances. And it means being able to move rapidly on opportunities.

The opportunities certainly are there. Global telecommunications is a booming business today, growing at good rates in the developed world, and at phenomenal rates in the rest of the world. Demand for ATM multimedia capacity -- that allows for affordable, real-time, multimedia communications services, involving the simultaneous transmission of voice, text, data and images -- is especially strong in developed countries, while the drive for dialtone is a powerful force in emerging economies. (...)

We are at a time when industry and governments need the wisdom to accept that there is no single or ideal path to globalization - that they must make many options possible for the industry. We need to stop trying to control the future, and instead increase our adaptability to emerging reality.

I think the path to being global requires letting go of what you cannot keep, like a national monopoly and investment restrictions. It means keeping your options open, taking them at the right moment -- and reaching for what you have to gain, which is the world.

CHARLES SIROIS
TELEGLOBE INC.



A question of quality, not quantity

December 10, 1996

I do not view our size as a disadvantage. Looking at United States banks, there is absolutely no evidence that scale carries any overriding advantages either in return on assets or equity. In recent years, smaller United States banks have actually outperformed larger ones. The level of wealth in your core market makes the difference in your bottom line, not your size.

Nor is our size as a \$50 billion bank an obstacle to innovation. We were the first bank in Canada to launch direct debit and home banking. Recently, we sold a banking system to a much bigger Canadian bank.

These are just a couple of examples to illustrate that you don't have to be a mammoth bank to innovate. And I could give you others from the credit union and trust industry. Banking is a very open and dynamic industry. There are many ways to put in place best practices at low cost. (...)

We want as big a slice of the market as we can get and we think our competitors fight us as hard as they fight anyone. This means striving to be as good as the best. If we don't, we're dead. Our shareholders want as good a return from us as from other investments. We operate accordingly.

I hope I have convinced you that the disadvantages to small size are few and far between and that there are no impediments to being as good as our larger competitors. There is plenty of room for medium-sized institutions in Canada today and in the 21st century.

ANDRÉ BÉRARD
NATIONAL BANK OF CANADA



Bigger is not always better

January 22, 1997

I am not saying that size is irrelevant. Clearly, there is a critical mass required to put in place the systems, products and services contemporary banking demands and to be able to do so in an efficient fashion. The point is, every Canadian bank has reached that critical mass. Today, the issue is not gross quantity. It is high quality. Bigger is not always better. But better is always better. (...)

Being a better bank is superior to being a bigger bank any day. Rather than adding another zero to overall assets, I would rather concentrate on adding additional percentage points to our return on equity. That's always been our focus. It's been our track record this year. It's our commitment for the future.

Innovation is the way to do that. And as anyone in virtually any business will happily tell you -- there's little evidence that size bolsters innovation or creativity. (...)

The current ten percent limit on bank ownership was legislated in the mid-1960s not because there was merger mania across the land. One of the primary reasons it was legislated was because Chase Manhattan wanted to buy TD.

Today, American banks are more flush with equity than are any of us. We must confront the implications of the probability that lifting the ten percent limit would result in continental, not Canadian consolidation. Knowingly or unknowingly, while the word may be merger, the meaning is American ownership. That may be positive or it may be negative, but it is a major public policy issue. It is not being debated. It should be.

A. CHARLES BAILLIE
TORONTO DOMINION BANK



U.S. access crucial to growth

January 22, 1997

Anyone operating within the relative trading tranquility of the Auto Pact could quite legitimately be forgiven for discounting the potential impact of United States protectionism. It's important to remember, however, that the Auto Pact does not offer any protection against anti-dumping actions. The Seeburn Division of Ventra, North America's leading producer of car jacks and a significant exporter into the United States, was impacted by an anti-dumping action in 1995 based on a ruling made thirty-one years earlier that applied, not to car jacks, but rather to jacks used for lifting buildings.

It's tempting to look upon such an event as an isolated incident. We should not, however, lose sight of the fact that the isolated incident of today has often a way of becoming the established administrative or legal practice of tomorrow.

If there is any one attribute that has characterized the partnership between steel and automotive, it has surely been an ability to gain strength and vitality from each other. Up until now, this attribute has manifested itself mainly in vehicle design and manufacture. (...)

It is, however, in Canada-United States trade policy, and especially in appreciation of how common rules would benefit both our industries, that the most significant exchange of strength and vitality stands to take place. Continued access to the United States market is crucial to the future growth and vitality of Canada's manufacturing base. Accomplishing this means complying fully with the regime that governs trade in North America. This is precisely what we, in the steel industry, are doing in order to ensure that such access to the United States market is maintained.

FREDERICK H. TELMER
STELCO INC.



Bring free trade to all the Americas

March 10, 1997

The concept of a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) deserves strong business support ... it is a grand and noble idea. It is a strategic initiative whose benefits are political, social and economic, as well as advantages to our enterprises. (...)

Canadian business would like to see decisive action with a minimum amount of delay. This is partly because an agreement makes good business sense. But there is also a danger that if we do not move quickly, the FTAA initiative could lose momentum.

We strongly support our government's position that the Heads of Government should announce the launch of negotiations at the March, 1998 Summit in Santiago, and the idea (not popular, I know, in some Latin American countries) of concluding the formal negotiations no later than December 31, 2003. This would give the FTAA a realistic chance of taking effect on January 1, 2005. (...)

As we move towards the FTAA, we must not let political disputes derail us. The Helms-Burton legislation is a case in point.

The Canadian business community strongly opposes the Helms-Burton act because we cannot abide by the effects of its extraterritorial reach. We also believe that flows of trade, investment, capital and technology are far more powerful forces in dealing with dictators and closed economies than are boycotts and isolation.

That having been said, I want to emphasize a point that is not entirely clear to our American friends -- the Canadian business community in the mainstream does not like dictatorial regimes nor what they do. In other words,

Castro is not our friend. And speaking personally, the sooner he goes and democracy is re-established in Cuba, the better -- for Cuba, for the hemisphere and for the world.

THOMAS P. D'AQUINO
BUSINESS COUNCIL ON NATIONAL ISSUES



Free trade has been good for rail

January 9, 1997

Chicago has become even more important as a result of the Free Trade Agreement Canada and the United States signed in 1989 -- an agreement that was later expanded to include Mexico.

Trade between our two countries has nearly doubled as a result. Now, every day, three quarters of a billion dollars (U.S.) of trade crosses the Canada-United States border.

Canada buys more United States' products than do Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy combined. The province of Ontario alone buys more United States' goods than Japan.

Transborder trade has provided enormous opportunities for growth. Since the FTA went into effect in January, 1989, CN's transborder traffic has increased by 48 percent; our revenue increased by 35 percent. About 39 percent of our revenue in 1995 came from transborder and United States domestic traffic.

PAUL M. TELLIER
CANADIAN NATIONAL



Opening doors, minds and spirits

March 26, 1997

Team Canada has wonderfully opened up business doors for Canadian exporters. More importantly to me, there opened a fine perspective of Team Canada for us, in a particular sense of including a Japanese business entity like ours in the same boat and plane, not as a competitor but as a strategic partner.

I felt some positive chemistry was fermented and developed between Canadians and others and between government and business. There, I could fulfill one of my prime objectives, networking. The participants, whether from business or government, had the invaluable opportunity to exchange views and ideas under casual circumstances and to discuss how they can work together.

It smoothed my efforts to introduce Canadian present and potential partners to our own already set-up local entities and their clients in the host countries. There were many opportunities for group and individual meetings. I hope this sort of networking might be regarded by the Canadian delegates as just as important as their efforts to make contact with potential clients in Asia on their own.

In addition, the people of our own companies and customers in those host countries became very interested in Team Canada, and became more interested in Canada itself. I think it is a very good sign of evolution for Japanese people who are, otherwise, likely to mix up Canada with the United States.

It is fascinating to see that Team Canada members integrated their team spirit to present a formidable united front. By working together toward a common goal, the combination of members from government and small, medium and large businesses opened doors not only of

those host countries but their own doors and minds and spirits.

KITARU SATO
MARUBENI CANADA LTD.



Exciting risks in China

January 22, 1997

China is not simply an extension of our presence in the region. It is not just paperwork and investment dollars. For us, China is an opportunity to participate in one of the most exciting and eventful happenings of our generation.

The fundamental transformation of the economic and political system that is now underway there and which directly affects fully one fifth of humanity is of significance to everyone on the face of the earth. We all have a vested interest in wishing the Chinese people well -- if they get it right and continue to improve their standard of living in an orderly and sustained way, then we all benefit. Should China stumble and fall, the consequences for the rest of the world, although difficult to predict, are unlikely to be positive. (...)

There are many risks, including all of those typically associated with extraordinary change - - inflation, disparity of income, unemployment, environmental degradation and reform of the state-owned enterprises are just some of the challenges that will have to be dealt with. Evolution of the political structure is perhaps the biggest unknown -- much has been written about what a post-Deng regime will look like. We'll have to wait and see. Despite these risks, I think you'll agree with me that there are few markets whose allure is as dazzling as China's.

DOMINIC D'ALESSANDRO
MANULIFE FINANCIAL



The wrong kind of caring

February 12, 1997

As much as the Luddites and their modern day counterparts would like, we cannot stop technological change. But we can try to slow it down. This is the tactic adopted in Europe in the guise of so-called "social" legislation. The result of that legislation is that once employed, a worker is virtually guaranteed a job for life. Legislators reckoned that with such rules, technological change wouldn't hurt.

But guess again. The cost of keeping employees has become so high that employers just stopped hiring. Unemployment rates have skyrocketed. France, Italy, and even the once exemplary Germany, at one time in the three (percent range), are at 12 percent or higher.

Compared to Europe, Canada's 9.7 percent doesn't look too bad. But look at the United States. Despite all the rhetoric, only one in 20, just five percent, are jobless.

What seems to be the difference between Canada, running at twice that level, and the United States? As the chief executive officer of a bi-national company, with production facilities on both sides of the border, I can give you the answer. We, too, have created rigidities in our labour market such that we discourage employment. It's just that we haven't been as thorough as the Europeans!

How ironic! Countries with so-called caring attitudes end up with more unemployment rather than less, as the result of social systems designed to help rather than hurt!

The United States has fewer laws and regulations rendering the labour force immobile. Far from creating problems, this lack of attempted mitigation has resulted in the best employment levels in the OECD.

Every time a government creates a law or regulation, our individual freedom is encroached upon. If we examine the pace of technological change in different societies, it quickly becomes clear that technological change is faster and economic growth quicker in societies where there is true freedom to innovate, where political decision-making is eschewed in favour of market forces, and people are rewarded for their efforts. Highly interventionist economies actually shrink.

ROGER PHILLIPS
IPSCO INC.



The world demands more

January 3, 1997

Employers today want students who are job-ready almost immediately upon graduation. It's not so much because the employers themselves have become more demanding. The world has become more demanding ... as many of you who have travelled it already know.

It's more competitive. It changes a lot faster. Businesses are hard-pressed sometimes just to keep up. They must focus relentlessly on quality and customer satisfaction. And they can't afford to be as forgiving of mistakes as they were before. They have to be able to adapt and they have to be able to do it quickly.

To put it in terms of the Peter Principle ... it won't take you as long these days to reach your level of incompetence if you can't keep up yourself. And if you can't adapt, you may not be given the time to learn. The skills don't come easily and many businesses won't be able to afford to teach them to you.

ERIC P. NEWELL
SYNCRUDE CANADA LTD.



Challenge of education involves more than excellence and access

November 29, 1996

The links between productivity growth and national educational achievement are many and complex, but in a time when economic growth is strongly centred in knowledge-based industries, their importance is undeniable and can only grow.

The competitiveness of any workforce is closely connected with its ability to acquire the right kinds of knowledge and skills, and it has been aptly said that knowledge is the only instrument of production that is not subject to diminishing returns. Canadians sense that instinctively, and it is a major reason why the polls tell us they are unhappy often with the performance of the great educational machine.

Again, there are real grounds for their unhappiness. While we have many good universities, and have made great strides in advancing accessibility to them, in spite of our high spending on education we have not always found it easy to balance the commitment to access with the need for excellence.

At the other end of the system, too often neither excellence nor access to university come into the question at all. Over 40 percent of adult Canadians are classified at Levels 1 and 2 on the literacy scale, which means they will have trouble reading a book or even using Microsoft Office.

Our high school dropout rate is estimated at 20 percent, something that is simply amazing when you learn that between 1991 and 1994, there were more than 300,000 new jobs for university graduates across Canada; there were more than 170,000 new jobs for men and women with a college diploma or trade

certificate; but for high school grads the number of jobs fell by 16,000, and for high school dropouts it fell by a disheartening 650,000 jobs. Clearly we can and must do better than this.

MATTHEW W. BARRETT
BANK OF MONTREAL



Patent protection creates jobs

February 10, 1997

Since 1987, when the federal government introduced its first set of patent strengthening legislation, -- Bill C-22 -- the industry in which I work has invested more than \$3 billion in R&D and will invest an additional \$2 billion by the year 2000. Some 3,000 highly-skilled Canadians have found new employment as a direct result of these investments. (...)

Patent modernization has been responsible for the dynamic growth which the biotechnology sector has experienced over the last decade. This sector has increased from fewer than a dozen firms a decade ago to more than 224 firms across Canada. Fifty-nine percent of these firms are health care related. This sector now employs more than 8,000 individuals.

Let's look at the generics. Since patent protection legislation has been enacted, this sector has done extremely well. Despite their initial fears, they have been experiencing double-digit growth. And that is good news, because Canada does benefit from a strong generic industry.

Finally, from a regional development perspective, the positive impact from R&D investments is now being felt in all four corners of Canada.

ANDRÉ MARCHETERRE
MERCK FROSST CANADA INC.



Pour le Canada

le 13 février 1997

On pourrait être tenté de croire que le Canada est en bonne voie de guérir les maux qui affligent la fédération. La vérité, c'est que nous avons fait un premier pas, mais qu'il reste encore beaucoup de chemin à parcourir.

On doit s'inquiéter du fait que l'initiative si louable de rééquilibrage de la fédération s'est actuellement enlisée dans des négociations ardues et complexes entre les gouvernements. On doit également s'inquiéter du fait que le Premier ministre Bouchard et son gouvernement rejettent systématiquement les invitations à participer au renouvellement de la fédération canadienne. Pour certains, il s'agit là d'un obstacle insurmontable. Il n'en est rien à mon avis.

Les réformes qui sont en cours de négociation et celle qui seront proposées en temps et lieu sont conçues pour intéresser les Québécoises et les Québécois qui veulent continuer de faire partie du Canada. Elles ne s'adressent pas aux idéologues purs et durs qui ont annoncé que, quoi que l'on fasse, ils quitteraient la famille canadienne. (...)

Je voudrais maintenant aborder l'autre aspiration fondamentale des nationalistes québécois -- le désir de reconnaissance et de sécurité culturelles et linguistiques au sein de la fédération.

Les initiatives prises au Parlement par le gouvernement fédéral pour faire reconnaître la société distincte et donner un droit de veto aux régions ne sont pas considérées comme suffisantes au Québec car elles ne fournissent aucune garantie permanente en vertu de la loi fondamentale du Canada. Nul ne devrait donc s'étonner que les fédéralistes québécois, sous la direction du chef de l'Opposition libérale,

Daniel Johnson, exigent l'enchâssement du statut de société distincte du Québec dans la constitution canadienne. (...)

Comment sortir de cette impasse? Une première solution consisterait peut-être pour les premiers ministres des provinces à lancer au cours des prochains mois une initiative conjointe qui permettrait à leur législature respective d'adopter une résolution reconnaissant le Québec pour ce qu'il est.

Si l'expression «société distincte» constitue un obstacle, alors qu'on l'abandonne sans hésitation pour la remplacer par des termes simples que tous les Canadiennes et les Canadiens pourraient facilement comprendre. Ce qu'il faut avant tout, c'est dégager un consensus sur le fond plutôt que sur telle ou telle appellation. Il n'y a pas d'autre façon de parvenir à une réconciliation durable et véritable avec les Québécois.

Je reconnais volontiers que l'adoption de résolutions par les législatures des neuf provinces n'équivaut pas à un enchâssement dans la Constitution. Il n'en demeure pas moins que cela dénoterait une détermination nouvelle et instaurerait un climat favorable, à terme, à un enchâssement. Il se pourrait que le chemin soit long mais, pour peu que le dossier soit bien mené, il a des chances d'aboutir. L'erreur suprême serait de nouveau d'essayer de faire accepter l'enchâssement et d'échouer.

THOMAS D'AQUINO

CONSEIL CANADIEN DES CHEFS D'ENTREPRISE

