

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

---

1992

## The Role of Canada's Prairie Provinces In Constitutional and Parliamentary Reform

Howard Cody  
*University of Maine*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

---

Cody, Howard, "The Role of Canada's Prairie Provinces In Constitutional and Parliamentary Reform" (1992). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 672.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/672>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

# THE ROLE OF CANADA'S PRAIRIE PROVINCES IN CONSTITUTIONAL AND PARLIAMENTARY REFORM

HOWARD CODY

Canada's federation always has been tentative. This motley collection of French and English speakers, multiculturals and Native peoples, extended across a narrow ribbon of land just above the border with the United States, seems eternally fated to endure tension and uncertainty concerning its national identity and political institutions. This uncertainty may now have reached its highest point in Canada's history. The 1990 failure of the Meech Lake constitutional accord, which was intended to bring Quebec voluntarily into Canada's 1982 constitution, has inspired an unprecedented quest for new constitutional provisions acceptable to Canadians throughout the country.<sup>1</sup> In this paper

I make a necessarily tentative effort to consider the interests and involvement of one of Canada's regions, the Prairie Provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, at the present stage of the ongoing constitutional reform process.

The search for a new constitutional formula has assumed a sense of urgency, with a specified deadline. The Meech Lake accord would have entrenched in the constitution the designation of French-speaking Quebec as a "distinct society." Many English Canadians, exemplified by Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells, believed that this provision would have assigned to Quebec potentially extensive powers denied to the other provinces. Accordingly the Meech Lake accord was widely unpopular in English Canada and remains so. As the June 1990 deadline for unanimous provincial legislative ratification approached, the Newfoundland and Manitoba legislatures refused their assent. In reaction Quebec's government has proposed to stage a referendum on political sovereignty by late October 1992 unless English Canada offers by that time an acceptable formula for a redesigned federation. Quebec expects considerably strengthened powers in any new federation; its government already has identified twenty-two

*An associate professor of political science at the University of Maine, Howard Cody has published articles on Canadian federalism and policymaking in journals in Canada, the United States, Great Britain, and Australia.*

[GPQ 12 (Summer 1992): 147-155]

desired new exclusive jurisdictions as its negotiating position. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's government presented its own twenty-eight point bargaining position in September 1991. Among other provisions it would enhance federal control over Canada's economic union but allow provinces to negotiate with Ottawa greater autonomy over culture and other fields. Inevitably a redesigned federation would greatly affect all of Canada, not simply Quebec or the Quebec-Ottawa relationship. All segments of Canadian society and all regions of the country must recognize and advance their interests in the constitutional reform process.<sup>2</sup>

At this juncture the stakes for the Prairies are especially high. The region occupies the vast and often unforgiving territory between prosperous Pacific Rim-oriented British Columbia and industrialized "fat-cat" Ontario. Most prairie Canadians desire a well-financed and internationally credible federal government in Ottawa. Only a respected Canada can market prairie grain, potash, and oil and supply "deficiency" payments and other supports that may be necessitated by poor world grain markets or low prices. At the same time, the thinly populated Prairies remain alienated from the distant and majoritarian-oriented federal government and feel themselves powerless to affect national policymaking allegedly dominated for more than a century by the huge central provinces of Ontario and Quebec.<sup>3</sup> Thus, prairie Canadians wish to keep a united Canada with a strong federal government while they simultaneously enhance prairie influence in national politics. This is a formidable dual assignment.

Complicating the Prairies' approach to the constitutional crisis is western Canada's growing economic bifurcation. Alberta and British Columbia become steadily wealthier while Manitoba and Saskatchewan stagnate. Statistics Canada reports that between 1970 and 1989 Alberta's share of Canada's gross domestic product rose faster than any other province's, while Manitoba's and Saskatchewan's shares declined faster than any other province's. A recent study of Manitoba and Saskatchewan urban centers blames federal government policies for "no

growth or actual economic shrinkage even before the recession" in the two provinces. It warns that "without major economic retooling, Manitoba and Saskatchewan . . . may soon become little more than hapless adjuncts to the (also distressed) U.S. regions of the northern plains."<sup>4</sup>

In this paper I have utilized interviews with members of Canada's House of Commons (MPs) to address these issues. I interviewed eighteen Prairie MPs in their Ottawa offices in May 1991 to ascertain their perspectives on their own provincial and regional interests in the looming constitutional talks. I also asked respondents for their suggestions and preferences for constitutional change and parliamentary reform. Eight of the respondents come from Alberta, six are Manitobans, and four represent Saskatchewan constituencies. By party the respondents include eight Progressive Conservatives (Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's party), five New Democrats (social democratic party), three Liberals, one Reform (right-wing western party) and one Independent.

#### THE PRAIRIES IN CANADA TODAY

Canada is a highly regionalized country. Canada's existing Senate, party caucuses in the House of Commons, some proposed formulas for constitutional amendments and Senate reform, and statistical information, are all organized on the basis of four or five regions. Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, and the West (or, sometimes, the Prairie Provinces and British Columbia separately) all enjoy regional status. This preoccupation with regional categories works against the Prairies. Western Canada is not nearly as homogenous as the four uniformly poor Atlantic provinces, much less the region-provinces of Quebec and Ontario. Moreover, there remains the disputed British Columbia perception that the Pacific province should be classified as a fifth region of its own. British Columbia's semi-apartheid enhances the West's diversity and further impairs the coherence of western contributions to national political life. Complicating this matter still further is the growing belief in Alberta that the province

should forsake its prairie neighbors to forge an alliance with British Columbia in its dealings with federal authorities.<sup>5</sup>

Even when we consider British Columbia a separate region, the three Prairie Provinces diverge sharply in their economic and political interests and especially in their fiscal relationships with Ottawa. Alberta is Canada's wealthiest province in respect to its independent fiscal capacity. It enjoys a much greater ability to raise revenues from its own sources (mostly oil and natural gas) than does any other province. Manitoba, most of whose residents live in economically stagnant Winnipeg, falls well into the "have-not" category of provinces that receive substantial "equalization" benefits from Ottawa to help them to provide services near national average levels. Grain and potash exporting Saskatchewan requires protection from the vagaries of weather and markets as well as equalization benefits. Until recently the "boom or bust" central Prairies occasionally enjoyed high incomes from grain sales, but the near collapse of overseas markets has forced Saskatchewan to rely heavily on federal grain "deficiency" payments, which approximated \$2 billion in 1991 alone, and grain prices reminiscent of the 1920s mean that prairie farmers "are going to need substantial help from Canadian taxpayers" for some time to come. Inevitably Manitoba and Saskatchewan, but not Alberta, have become steadily more dependent on federal assistance since the 1970s.<sup>6</sup> Fiscal disparities alone can make Alberta appear to be "another country," as a Winnipeg Liberal MP described the province. A rural Saskatchewan New Democrat went further, claiming that oil wealth has helped to "Americanize" Alberta in respect to its values and political culture.

The sharp intraregional divergences cause the Prairie Provinces to advance quite different interests or similar interests in unequal ways. When prairie provincial governments pursue "beggarmy-neighbor" policies, Alberta enjoys distinct advantages. To cite one instance among many, a rural Manitoba Conservative complained that Alberta subsidizes its meat packing industry through tax concessions that other Prairie Prov-

inces cannot afford, thereby luring meat packing plants elsewhere in the West to move to Alberta. The same respondent admitted that the Conservative Party's western regional caucus in Parliament finds it "hard to function" under these circumstances.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the perception that the Prairies are "simply growing apart," Winnipeg Liberal MP Lloyd Axworthy recently appealed for the Prairie Provinces to coordinate their policies respecting grain pools, telecommunications systems, energy planning, the environment, and higher education. Such cooperation could enhance efficiency, increase bargaining power in constitutional and other national policymaking, and improve competitiveness in international trade. Presumably the region could benefit from enhanced international credibility, especially in the struggle against the European Community's agricultural subsidies. (On the other hand, a rural Saskatchewan respondent observed that the greatest obstacle to Canadian grain sales is the fact that Europe has become a net exporter of food.) In any case the early political and media responses to the Axworthy appeal were favorable but predictably pessimistic about the chances for increased interprovincial cooperation on the Prairies.<sup>7</sup>

#### RESTRUCTURING THE CANADIAN FEDERATION: DIVISION OF POWERS

With the present constitution apparently discredited, Canadians face six broad options for their federal system. The options are offered here in two groups, three of which maintain the principle of provincial equality and three of which repudiate it. Each group is presented from the most to the least centralized. The options are rebalanced federalism, asymmetric (or checkerboard) federalism, general decentralization, special status federalism, sovereignty-association federalism (or institutionalized bipolarity), and full Quebec sovereignty.

Three options would perpetuate provincial equality in principle if not in practice. Rebalanced federalism would reallocate several fed-

eral and provincial jurisdictions that supposedly could be exercised more efficiently at the other level. Federal authority over free movement of people, goods, and services could be strengthened in return for, say, full provincial freedom over health and other social services. In the second option, asymmetric or checkerboard federalism, all ten provinces would be offered wholly new powers, such as unemployment insurance, and the complete freedom Quebec demands in at least some of the fields now shared with Ottawa, such as health, energy, environment, industry, income tax, social and family services, communications, agriculture, manpower, regional economic development, and language. Because provinces could pick and choose from the available offerings, some provinces would potentially retain much more extensive responsibilities and a very different relationship with Ottawa than others, but officially all provinces would remain constitutionally equal. Canada already possesses various asymmetric arrangements.<sup>8</sup> Under general decentralization, most or all of the above jurisdictions would be fully entrusted to all ten provinces whether they wanted them or not. Canada would then approximate a confederation whose member states have equal powers.

The other three options would place Quebec, and only Quebec, in a distinct power position. Special status federalism, which appears to be the preference of the Quebec government, would extend full control over many jurisdictions to Quebec alone, leaving Ottawa still partially or wholly concerned with these activities in the other provinces. Quebec would remain as a province, enjoying continued federal assistance and parliamentary representation. Sovereignty-association or institutionalized bipolarity, the objective of Quebec's opposition Parti Quebecois, would have Quebec assume legal sovereignty and, its proponents hope, enjoy the trappings of an independent state such as membership in the United Nations. A formal economic association with Canada would continue to exist, however, to administer a common currency and some sort of economic union through joint institutions. Finally, under full

Quebec sovereignty, supported by the relatively few extreme Quebec sovereigntists, Canada and Quebec would maintain no greater institutional integration than Canada and the United States. Many functional links would remain possible, including free trade.

Put briefly, prairie MPs suggested that their region wishes Canada to remain united, with all provinces on an equal constitutional footing, and much, although not necessarily all, existing federal authority retained. They would accept either rebalanced federalism or asymmetric federalism, particularly if federal supervision of the national economy and valued national institutions, such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, were preserved. The options that explicitly recognize Quebec's distinctiveness with special powers for Quebec alone encounter vigorous resistance in the West. They are widely interpreted as yet another outrage in which only Quebec gets what it wants while the legitimate concerns of other provinces are ignored. On the other hand, most prairie MPs believe that the confederal general decentralization option offers a formula for national disintegration. Even Alberta Conservatives in Parliament—although not necessarily their provincial government—believe that a radically attenuated federal government would damage Canadians' national identity and allegiance. Saskatchewan and Manitoba respondents fear that a weak federal government would prove unable or unwilling to subsidize their provinces or to market their products abroad. This last concern is most acute in Saskatchewan, which already suffers from the same farm and small-town depopulation as the plains states south of the border. According to Robert Sheppard,

nearly 85,000 people, mostly young and educated, have left the province in the past five years. According to some accounts, nearly 1,000 farms have vanished each year since 1982, and with them have gone the jobs at the repair shops and machinery outlets, and the vibrancy of many small towns.<sup>9</sup>

Mindful of these perceptions, the Mulroney government has presented a proposal that combines features of rebalanced and asymmetric federalism. The program includes essentially four provisions in this respect: Parliament would gain sweeping new authority to make laws that it declares necessary for the efficient functioning of the economic union, subject to the assent of seven provinces with fifty percent of Canada's population; a new mostly provincially appointed Council of the Federation would ratify certain federal economic policies on the same "7/50" basis; the provinces would receive the "non-national" residual powers now assigned to Parliament plus labor market training; and the current asymmetry between provinces' powers would increase as Ottawa "delegates" various federal responsibilities, such as culture and immigration, through separate arrangements with each province, while provinces also "opt out" from federal spending programs (with compensation) and from federal initiatives designed to advance the efficient functioning of the economic union. The first two of these provisions are given little chance of surviving the coming negotiations.

A different version of asymmetry, unmentioned in the federal proposals but popular with many senior Canadian political leaders, is "CPP," or concurrency (shared federal and provincial jurisdiction) with provincial paramountcy (supremacy).<sup>10</sup> This system could prove more far-reaching than the federal proposals. Under this arrangement, each province would be offered the same extensive "menu" of new powers that Quebec is now demanding, and some new tax jurisdiction to fund them, with final provincial authority wherever each province chooses. For example, if, as is likely, communications were to appear on this list, a province could accept existing federal policy or implement its own communications policy whatever Ottawa or other provinces wished. A senior Alberta Conservative respondent called asymmetric arrangements available to all provinces an essential element of a "face-saving" deal for the West, as Quebec would presumably make much more frequent use of delegation or

provincial paramountcy than the other provinces. Through this device, each province could secure an informal special status in accordance with its self-defined interests while all ten provinces theoretically remained equal. The Mulroney government acknowledges the influence of David Milne's recent essay on its consideration of concurrency with provincial paramountcy.<sup>11</sup> "Rebalancing" provisions to strengthen federal enforcement of free movement from province to province could be incorporated into a delegation or CPP formula.

Concurrency with provincial paramountcy is tempting as a resolution to Canada's constitutional predicament. For Quebec to accept this arrangement, the menu of available new provincial responsibilities would have to be lengthy and inclusive. Quebec would probably assume all possible jurisdictions, but power-hungry provinces elsewhere, also exasperated with perceived federal "interference" in their affairs, probably would seek delegation or paramountcy only in so much as they could afford it. Accordingly, two broad classes of provinces could result: Quebec and the three wealthiest provinces, Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta, likely would take over many more jurisdictions than the other provinces, including Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The Atlantic provinces, Canada's poorest, would undertake the fewest responsibilities. A similar scenario also could unfold under the federal proposals, especially if "culture" is defined very broadly.

Questions inevitably arise from such an arrangement: If wealthy provinces assume the tax-raising capability to fund their new responsibilities, where will Ottawa find the money to finance these services in the "have-not" provinces, which are now funded primarily by the richer provinces? Albertans contend that their province "lost" at least \$50 billion in the 1970s and early 1980s when Ottawa forced them to sell their oil to the rest of Canada at prices well below world levels. Yet what would have happened to the national fabric if Alberta had gained this additional revenue at the expense of other provinces' residents? John Dafoe uses 1988 figures to show how fiscal federalism differentially

affects the provinces. In that year Alberta paid \$1688 per capita more in federal taxes than it received in federal services. By contrast, Saskatchewan and Manitoba respectively received \$1845 and \$1521 more than they paid.<sup>12</sup>

Might Ottawa not become as crippled fiscally by CPP formula as in general decentralization? If each province exercised different powers, how would their MPs and cabinet ministers operate in Ottawa? Would they participate in federal policymaking involving jurisdictions that their own provinces had assumed completely? What about federal tax policies that would affect each province differently, some more so than others? Milne addresses the foregoing questions, but not those that follow. In any event his assurance that each province will be satisfied with its continued participation in federal policymaking on the current representational basis, because concurrency with provincial paramountcy leaves the provinces theoretically equal, is not entirely convincing. Indeed, might not CPP or the federal proposals allow the great majority of MPs and cabinet ministers who are from larger provinces to dominate federal policymaking in matters disproportionately or exclusively affecting the smaller provinces? How would the smaller provinces react to this situation?

There is another question: Is there a successful asymmetric federation in operation today? The answer is yes. Malaysia gives Sarawak and Sabah, on Borneo, some powers not exercised by the states in peninsular Malaysia. The Bornean states enjoy full representation in the Kuala Lumpur parliament, but they have relatively few people and small parliamentary representation. There is no existing or historical example of the concurrency with provincial paramountcy variation of asymmetric federalism.

#### RESTRUCTURING THE CANADIAN FEDERATION: PARLIAMENT

While a reallocation of jurisdictional powers constitutes Quebec's overriding objective in Canada's constitutional crisis, residents of the Prairie Provinces consider parliamentary reform a more urgent priority. As the right-wing pop-

ulist Reform Party puts it, "the West wants in," namely access to power over federal policymaking. This access can only be assured through parliamentary reform, especially reform of the presently appointive and ineffectual Senate, to offset Ontario and Quebec's majoritarian dominance of the House of Commons.<sup>13</sup> Recall that a senior Alberta Conservative observed that the West may be persuaded to accept delegation or concurrency with provincial paramountcy as part of a face-saving arrangement. The other, possibly indispensable, component of this deal would be Senate reform. Since 1985 Alberta's provincial government has led the movement for an all-new "Triple E" Senate. This chamber would be elected, effective, and have equal representation per province, much like the upper houses in Australia and the United States. Public opinion polls routinely report that more than seventy percent of westerners desire a Triple E Senate.<sup>14</sup>

Senate reform presents a daunting array of difficulties, both in implementation and operation. There are problems attending all components of Triple E, especially equal representation per province. Despite the Australian and United States provisions for small state power through a Triple E Senate, or more likely because of the observed results of these practices, the governments of Ontario and especially Quebec lack enthusiasm for an arrangement in which their provinces, with 60 percent of Canada's population, would supply only 20 percent of the senators. Largely for this reason, the new federal proposals call only for a "more equitable" distribution of Senate seats, without providing any definition of "equitable." A new Senate's potential effectiveness is also controversial. Even Alberta proposes a mere suspensive (temporary) veto over most legislation and no veto at all over money bills. Under the federal proposal, the Senate would have no legislative role in raising or spending money but a six-month suspensive veto over matters of national importance such as national defense and international issues and a full veto on other legislation. Some Senate reformers maintain that there is little point in pursuing Senate reform

unless the new chamber's powers and credibility approach those of the House of Commons.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, there are disagreements over procedures for electing senators. Alberta wants all senators elected provincewide under the familiar plurality (first-past-the-post) system. Some other reformers prefer senatorial districts inside provinces or proportional representation. The federal proposals specify only that senators be elected at the same time as MPs. Before Senate reform can be implemented, these and other details will require reconciliation of widely varying conceptions of the role and character of a new upper house.

Prairie MPs betray markedly less enthusiasm for Senate reform than their constituents. Many MPs, both New Democrats and Conservatives, would like the upper house abolished altogether. Understandably they perceive a strong Senate as an unwelcome limitation on their own chamber's powers. They also suspect that Ontario and Quebec will never accept Triple E. Moreover, one Alberta Conservative openly predicted that the seven "have-not" provinces would dominate a Triple E Senate. He believed that they would exploit any such chamber to induce Ottawa to transfer additional revenues from wealthy provinces like his own to poorer provinces such as Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Thus, a Triple E Senate would undermine Alberta's interests but not those of the other Prairie Provinces. Additionally some MPs of all parties believe that a Triple E upper house blurs the cabinet's clear responsibility to the lower house, which is a long-cherished hallmark of the British-derived Westminster parliamentary system. Many Canadians believe that crises generated by Australia's Senate, especially the 1975 affair that culminated in the dismissal of the government, suggests the inadvisability of a strong upper house in a Westminster parliament.

Despite these reservations, many MPs concede that public pressure and growing support for the Reform Party may force creation of a "Double E" (elected and effective) Senate that would replace equal representation per province with roughly equal representation per region or

a population-sensitive apportionment by province. This might mollify Ontario and Quebec, but under regional near-equality the divergent interests of the Prairie Provinces would neutralize much of the region's influence. British Columbia's claim to represent a region of its own also would have to be addressed in a regionally oriented Senate, as would the divisive issues relating to powers and electoral arrangements. Yet the specter of a Reform breakthrough in the next election, due by the end of 1993, displacing dozens of sitting MPs of all other parties, especially Conservatives, apparently has concentrated the minds and overcome the misgivings of the Mulroney government and many MPs of all parties on the Senate reform issue.<sup>16</sup> Surely Reform's right-wing program, which combines drastic reductions in federal taxes and social programs with an American-style electoral system, contributes to the consensus that the Reform threat must be countered.

Public support for Senate reform closely accompanies public exasperation with the negative and polarized environment, the narrow partisanship, and the publicly unaccountable voting behavior characteristic of the House of Commons. A highly placed Alberta Conservative confessed that Canadians—perhaps Westerners above all—are "fed up" and want MPs to "clean up the place." The Reform platform calls for MPs to operate without party discipline on all votes in committees and on the House floor, in line with constituency opinion.<sup>17</sup> This runs utterly contrary to the familiar party-dominant parliamentary norms in Canada and other Westminster parliaments. The Conservative government and the major opposition parties are gradually, and grudgingly, preparing to offer backbenchers a much wider range of "free votes" in order to weaken Reform's appeal and to avert those still greater American-style evils that Reform also proposes, namely frequent referenda and the recall of elected officials. Accordingly the federal proposals vaguely endorse more free votes for individual MPs.

The Commons reform process, which requires no constitutional amendments, has been



under way for some time. Since the late 1960s, but especially since 1986, MPs have acquired increasingly independent standing committees and better personal and committee staff support.<sup>18</sup> While Commons reform is universally acclaimed as an enhancement of MPs' general usefulness if not their policymaking power, there remains strong opposition in all parties—except Reform—to such an extension of freedom that Canadian MPs come to resemble members of the United States Congress. The features of Congress that the MPs I interviewed liked least are what they perceive as party weakness and interest group domination. Parliamentary reformers of both Canadian chambers will endeavor to prevent these evils from extending to Canada. Consistent with the Saskatchewan MP's description of Alberta as the most Americanized province, Conservative Alberta MPs admitted some admiration for the congressional practices of nonpartisan logrolling and the relatively open committee investigations and bargaining over legislation. Most respondents of all three major parties, however, still treasure party caucus solidarity. They insisted that parties must be seen clearly to "stand for something" and that MPs should unconditionally declare themselves "in" or "out" on every issue. Those who even occasionally take the "out" position, opposing party policy, earned such epithets as "unreliables" and "flakes." MPs cannot be expected to assert much independence from party policy when confronted with a choice between collegial acceptance and social ostracism, even if more "free votes" are theoretically permitted in the future.

## CONCLUSION

What lies ahead for the Prairies? We cannot expect a coordinated regional strategy in constitutional negotiations. Saskatchewan and Manitoba will seek to protect federal fiscal power, while Alberta, possibly joining British Columbia, will favor substantial tax and jurisdictional decentralization. Alberta seeks Senate reform plus autonomy over energy (including royalties) and taxes. Senate reform on a Triple

E model retains its allure throughout the region. Thanks to Quebec's sovereigntist potential and Reform's electoral threat, the likeliest outcomes include increasingly asymmetric federalism through delegation or concurrency with provincial paramountcy, a strengthening of the wealthiest provinces at Ottawa's expense, Senate reform on a Double E model (but with no absolute veto over all legislation), and limited enhancement of backbench MPs' independence from party leaders' control. Prairie public opinion and all of the MPs interviewed for this paper probably could accept this package, but on the whole only Alberta in the region would benefit from it.

Indeed, the long-term outlook for Saskatchewan and Manitoba (and the Atlantic provinces) is not encouraging. All of the "have-not" provinces may soon be left largely to their own devices as early victims of a more decentralized federalism. Ottawa policymakers may ask: "Why should—and how can—we keep paying Prairie farmers billions to produce (or not produce) grain that we cannot sell?" Delegation or concurrency with provincial paramountcy would raise these and other questions relating to new federal jurisdictional and fiscal limitations and the perceived inefficiency and futility of equalization and other support programs. Surely a Triple E or even a Double E Senate could enhance prairie participation in federal policymaking, but it would prove cruelly ironic if less advantaged provinces finally secure influence over federal policymaking through Senate reform just as Ottawa surrenders the political will, the fiscal capacity, and the international credibility that these provinces need.

## NOTES

1. For accounts by an English Canadian and a French Canadian of the Meech Lake process and its ultimate failure, see Andrew Cohen, *A Deal Undone: The Making and Unmaking of the Meech Lake Accord* (Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre Ltd., 1990); and Pierre Fournier, *A Meech Lake Post-Mortem: Is Quebec Sovereignty Inevitable?* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

2. Joan Bryden, "English Canada Says 'No Way' to Distinct Society for Quebec," *Montreal Gazette*, 5

June 1991, A12; Patricia Poirier, "Sovereignists Winning Battle, Top Pollsters in Quebec Say," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 9 March 1991, A5; Rheal Seguin, "Canada First Choice of Liberals, Bourassa Says," *Globe and Mail*, 5 February 1991, A1; Government of Canada, *Canadian Federalism and Economic Union: Partnership for Prosperity* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1991).

3. For expressions of western alienation, see *Regional Representation: The Canadian Partnership* (Calgary: Canada West Foundation, 1981); David Kilgour, *Inside Outer Canada* (Edmonton: Lone Pine Publishing, 1990); and David E. Smith, "Perennial Alienation: The Prairie West in the Canadian Federation," in Michael Burgess, ed., *Canadian Federalism: Past, Present and Future* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990).

4. Statistics Canada, cited in Miro Cernetig, "How the West Won," *Globe and Mail*, 25 January 1992, D1; David Roberts, "Plain Facts Show Prairies Hurtling," *Globe and Mail*, 24 February 1992, A1, A6 (quoted).

5. Robert Sheppard, "Holding Hands Across the Rockies," *Globe and Mail*, 20 February 1991, A19.

6. John Dafoe, "Record Low Prices on Biggest Crop Ever is a Bitter Irony for Grain Farmers," *Globe and Mail*, 3 August 1991, D2 (quoted); David Roberts, "Western Premiers Expected to Focus on Economy," *Globe and Mail*, 13 May 1991, A3.

7. Roberts, "Western Premiers" (note 6 above); Lloyd Axworthy, "Prairie Integration 1992," Speech before Manitoba Federal Liberal Policy Conference, Winnipeg, 11 May 1991 (mimeographed copy in author's possession), pp. 4-5; Jeffrey Simpson, "One Man's Welcome Departure from the Usual Liberal Rant," *Globe and Mail*, 17 May 1991, A16.

8. David Milne, "Equality or Asymmetry: Why Choose?" Ronald L. Watts and Douglas M. Brown, eds., *Options for a New Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 285-307.

9. Robert Sheppard, "Empty Homes on a Full Map," *Globe and Mail*, 8 October 1991, A19.

10. It will be difficult for Canadians to accept the initials "CPP" in this context because for a quarter century they have stood for "Canada Pension Plan." A detailed description of concurrency with provincial paramountcy and other options presently available to Canadians may be found in Ronald L. Watts, "Canada's Constitutional Options: An Outline," in Watts and Brown, *Options* (note 8 above), pp. 15-30.

11. Milne, "Equality or Asymmetry" (note 8 above).

12. On Alberta's argument see John Grimond, "Nice Country, Nice Mess," *Economist*, 29 June 1991, pp. 12-13; John Dafoe, "Canadians Alone Reduce Nationhood to Fiscal Fiddling," *Globe and Mail*, 23 February 1991, D2.

13. For a discussion of how Reform proposes to secure western access to federal policymaking, see Murray Dobbin, *Preston Manning and the Reform Party* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1991), pp. 191-206. For the best discussion of Canada's existing Senate, see Colin Campbell, *The Canadian Senate: A Lobby from Within* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978).

14. Alberta Select Special Committee on Upper House Reform, *Strengthening Canada: Reform of Canada's Senate* (Edmonton: Province of Alberta, 1985); Cernetig, "How the West Won" (note 4 above).

15. David Elton and Peter McCormick, *Measuring Senate Effectiveness* (Calgary: Canada West Foundation, 1991).

16. On the Reform Party's popularity and its impact on Mulroney government policies, see Miro Cernetig, "Reaction to Reform Delights Calgary," *Globe and Mail*, 21 May 1991, A4.

17. Miro Cernetig, "Could Preston Manning Pull It Off?" *Globe and Mail*, 30 March 1991, D4.

18. For the best treatment of the parliamentary reform process to date, see C.E.S. Franks, *The Parliament of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), especially pp. 161-85 and 219-26.