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Desmond Morton

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

History and Nationality in Canada: Variations on an Old Theme

DESMOND MORTON

The presidential address to the Canadian Historical Association is an honourable tradition, rewarding members very frequently with wise and perceptive syntheses of our discipline. However, sometimes there are those other years. Amidst the galaxies, there are also those black holes of apparent emptiness, fascinating only because we wonder how they could have been allowed to happen.

One explanation is democracy. Not so very long ago, when I first became a member of this Association, presidents were chosen in a private but efficient way by people who knew the available talent and who determined whose turn it was. Suddenly, our members insisted on open elections, demanding even that they be provided with a choice. Yet historians, more than most, should have foreseen that elections are imperfect. One of my distinguished colleagues was heard to complain of the quality of our parliamentary representatives. "But surely", suggested a more tolerant friend, "even rogues and half-wits deserve a voice in the House of Commons." "Maybe", replied the colleague, "but they should be content with proportional representation."

Our Association has respected that principle, but accidents are inevitable in any democratic process. This afternoon, brought before the assembled members of this society, I must confess my academic rake's progress—a military college B.A., a fifteen-guinea M.A., a Ph.D. without benefit of comprehensives. "Morton and theory", wrote one of my long-suffering mentors, "appear to be uncongenial." Do I compound my offences or is it a plea in mitigation to admit that I have spent the past four years in academic administration? While you have read microfilm, I have studied washroom graffiti; while you have delivered papers to scholarly audiences, I have spoken to the Rotary Clubs; while you have profited from current scholarship, I struggled through student petitions and faculty grievances.

In the Platonic imagery, the presidential address should represent a descent from the sunshine; for me, it is an unavailing struggle up from the darkness of the cave. However, if darkness destroys perspective, it also inspires reflection. It is, after all, in that world of shadows and confusion that all of us make our living and our contribution. Down in the cave, it is no secret that public support for scholarship and disinterested research can no longer be taken for granted. Historians, like others, are called upon to justify their social utility. We may find that demand unworthy or distracting, but we must remember that answers will be provided—by us or by default.

We should not flinch from the task. Our role in society is neither new nor easily

supplanted. Most people can be persuaded that history is another word for experience. Whatever our qualifications or our field of specialization, our task is to help people to understand their time, their society, and themselves. In *Ways of Seeing*, the English critic, John Berger, insists that "a people or a class which is cut off from its own past is far less free to choose and to act as a people or class than one that has been able to situate itself in history."[1] Historians in Canada have always understood their responsibility; thanks to new resources and new techniques, we shall be steadily better able to fulfil it.

We would not be human if, as historians, we did not fall into the historicist temptation. We have shared the frustration implicit in Hegel's ironic observation: "...what history and experience teach is this—that people and governments never have learned anything from history nor acted on principles deduced from it."[2] In defiance of our own experience, historians go on trying to prove Hegel wrong. That mistakes our function.

Que ce soit en temps de stabilité ou de changement, il se peut que les historiens n'aient aucune formule spéciale pour garantir leurs compatriotes contre la folie ou l'extravagance. Mais nous avons l'obligation toute particulière de faire en sorte que les mythes ou les falsifications délibérées ne deviennent pas des certitudes et, par conséquent, des fondements pour les politiques actuelles. Nous devrions, dans la mesure du possible, décourager nos compatriotes de tirer des leçons néfastes des Plaines d'Abraham ou de la construction du Canadien-Pacifique. Nous devrions également déplorer les absurdités et les distortions, même si elles sont populaires et politiquement rentables et même lorsqu'elles sont présentées par Radio-Canada à un coût de $2.2 millions.[3]

Mais, cent fois plus dangereux que les tromperies télévisées, sont les rapports officiels, rédigés par des soit-disants experts, qui offrent des prescriptions pour notre avenir collectif sans s'appuyer sur une connaissance approfondie de notre passé. Quelle que soit la voie que le Canada adoptera, celle de la dualité ou de dix petites nationalités provinciales, il faudra que les historiens de ce pays demandent au comité Robarts-Pépin de baser leurs recommandations importantes sur de solides assises historiques.[4]

Dans son étude récente sur la situation des écrits historiques canadiens, H.J. Hanham a attiré notre attention sur notre vieille préoccupation des questions d'identité nationale. Comme Herder, Mazzini ou Macaulay, les historiens canadiens tenaient à ce que l'on se souvienne d'eux comme les fondateurs de leur nation. On ne doute pas que des hommes comme François-Xavier Garneau, Lionel Groulx, Harold Innis, Donald Creighton et Michel Brunet aient rempli ce rôle. Peut-être, comme Hanham le suggère, cette préoccupation pour une identité était-elle une crise nécessaire mais

1 John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (New York, 1973), p. 33.

2 As cited by G.B. Shaw in the preface to *Heartbreak House*, from *The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw* (London, 1972), V, p. 55.

3 See, for example, Janet Rosenstock and Dennis Adair, *Riel* (Toronto, 1979), pp. 7-8.

4 For analysis of the report of the Task Force on National Unity, (Ottawa, 1979), I am indebted to Professor G.R. Cook and to Professor David Kwavnick.

adolescente, une sorte d'acné historiographique avant que notre discipline n'atteigne sa majorité.

On peut facilement comprendre l'exaspération d'un historien anglais distingué, très conscient du fait que le monde a des problèmes plus pressants et plus intéressants que la désunion canadienne. Pourquoi ne pas accepter notre pays comme un fait établi? Malheureusement, le professeur Hanham est pour le moins en avance sur la réalité. Comme Jacques Monet nous le rappelait, il y a trois ans, les historiens canadiens sont aussi divisés que leur pays.[5] Ces divergences sont presque un paradigme de celles qui affectent le Canada et on en voit le reflet dans la prolifération des comités et des groupes de recherche dans cette Societé de même que dans les revues et les associations créées dans tout le pays durant cette dernière décennie. Les Canadiens divisés, scindés par la région, l'ethnie, la langue ou les circonstances économiques, ont donné naissance à des histoires morcellées.

In terms of both history and of its perception across Canada, duality is still more important than other forms of differentiation. In the contrasting historical experience of anglophone and francophone Canada, we can find rival ideological continua as old as our sharing of this half-continent. The sense of purpose and of collectivity which appears to animate so many francophone Québécois, whether *fédéralistes* or *indépendantistes*, appears, at least to outsiders, to rest on a powerful and broadly shared sense of history. It is a foundation which Canadians as a whole simply do not share and which, to some considerable degree, they have systematically denied themselves. The absence of that common sense of history, whether of Canada as a whole or of English-speaking Canada, undermines the reality of that other "nation" which the Task Force on National Unity desperately needed for its model of duality.

The debate about Canadian confederation is not between two nations or between two conflicting identities, as the Pépin-Robarts report contended; it is between a minority for whom history has shaped an identity and an almost accidental majority for whom a sense of common historical identity has been persistently denied. It is a contrast vividly illustrated by the familiar French and English versions of "O Canada". The words of Sir Adolphe Routier evoke an ancestral epic, deeds of valour, an inheritance of "nos foyers et nos droits" which must at all costs be defended. Conversely, Judge Weir could offer English-speaking Canadians little more than repetitive pleas to "stand on guard" in hope that eventually might arise "the true north strong and free".

The roots of French Canada's historical sense are easily traced to the disastrous, demoralizing defeat of the *Patriotes* in the rebellions of 1837 and 1838. Lord Durham, shimmering with that liberal self-confidence that Thomas Macaulay was helping to instil in the British ruling class, proclaimed that French Canadians were a people without a history. From that dictum came an inescapable conclusion: the French Canadians must vanish as an entity. Lord Durham was right: without a history, a nation cannot exist. And Lord Durham was wrong: French Canada had a history. What Franz Palacky would do for the Czechs and Adam Mickiewicz for the Poles,

5 Jacques Monet, "Communauté et continuité: vers un nouveau passé", *Historical Papers*, (1976), pp. 5-7 et *passim*.

François-Xavier Garneau would do for his people. He would confound Lord Durham and endow his people with an epic understanding of themselves.

Comme la plupart des historiens disparus, Garneau est aujourd'hui plus loué qu'il n'est lu. Sa prétention à l'inspiration divine est démodée. Il a été trop radical pour son époque; il est trop conservateur pour la nôtre. Cependant, c'est Garneau qui a établi l'histoire comme le pilier idéologique de la survivance, plus durable que le catholicisme ou que le mythe du sol parce que l'histoire leur a survécu. Les héritiers de Garneau sont nombreux au Canada français et le chanoine Groulx en est un des plus importants. Chez Groulx, l'historien était apparenté au prêtre dans cette communion mystique entre le passé et le présent. De même, l'historien était aussi un prophète—rôle que Groulx remplit dans son émission radiophonique célèbre de 1937, et, au cours de laquelle il exprima à haute voix ce que peu de gens, jusqu'alors, n'avaient même osé penser:

> Voilà pourquoi je suis de ceux qui espèrent. Parce qu'il y a Dieu, parce qu'il a notre histoire, parce qu'il y a la jeunesse, j'espère. J'espère avec tous les ancêtres qui ont espéré; j'espère avec tous les espérants d'aujourd'hui; j'espère par-dessus mon temps, par-dessus tous les découragés. Qu'on le veuille ou qu'on ne le veuille pas, notre Etat français nous l'aurons; nous l'aurons jeune, fort, rayonnant et beau, foyer spirituel, pôle dynamique pour toute l'Amérique française.[6]

Of course, not all French-Canadian historians have been disciples of this mystic nationalism nor practitioners of this form of historicism. The proponents of a *Laurentie* or of an independent Quebec must argue with those who insist that Canada as a whole is, in part, a French achievement and wholly a French-Canadian patrimony. Who here would deny that modern Québécois historians are diverse in ideology and interpretation and among the most merciless critics of the old and self-congratulatory myths? At the same time, who would deny that our colleagues in Quebec work in a culture in which the past is not only a present reality, but the most vital remaining ideological anchor for *la survivance*?

And what can we say about the other side of our purported Canadian duality? Remembering always that degrees, not absolutes, are in question, is there any comparable collective awareness of a common past among English-speaking Canadians? History is not without support outside Quebec; indeed, there is an almost desperate search for roots and heritages and myths of the past. Yet those who have sought to encompass Canada in a simple, widely accepted image have not only consistently failed, but suffered disparagement for their attempt. Professor Hanham disposes of that fact bluntly and with an air of helpful finality: "If there is a 'Canadian principle', it is that there shall be no national mould . . . ."[7] The would-be inventors of an English-Canadian nation have been scorned as Torontonians or Imperialists. Even the climatic determinists have failed. "Notre pays c'est l'hiver", suggested Gilles Vigneault, but any beneficial consequences have been defeated by central heating.

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6 Lionel Groulx, "L'histoire, gardienne des traditions vivantes", *Directives* (Montréal, 1959), p. 222.

7 H.J. Hanham, "Canadian History in the 1970's", *Canadian Historical Review*, LVIII (March 1977), p. 3.

Rejection of national moulds, recognized and approved by Professor Hanham, has become a commonplace among English-speaking historians. We are familiar with the doctrines of Donald Creighton, presented so often with scholarship and eloquence before this Association. Like other young anglophone historians, Creighton began with the conviction that he should write of the wrongs inflicted on the Lower Canadians. His opinions altered. The true builders of this country, he concluded, were those Montreal merchants, who, from the time of Sir James Murray, have been excoriated by most right-thinking Canadians. It was the Montrealers' schemes for canals and railways and financial empires, Creighton insisted, which provided the framework for a Canada *a mare usque ad marem*. Creighton's Laurentianism became the deliberate contradiction of the *Laurentie* of Canon Groulx.

Yet even to recall the Creighton version of Canada before a sophisticated audience is to underline its limitations as a national historic myth, since surely such a myth must unite, not divide. Whatever the validity of the Creighton analysis of the dynamic that produced Confederation, its consequences drove us apart. What place is there in the Creighton vision for the Québécois except as the perennial, parochial foes of the Laurentian vision? How could easterners revel in the National Policy or the Monopoly Clause? I was not born in Calgary nor raised in Regina and Winnipeg to worship at the shrine of the CPR. For working people, their role in the "National Dream" was to labour diligently, accept lower wages than south of the border, and rejoice in a Trade Unions Act of 1872 which was, quite literally, a nullity.

English-speaking Canadians have not been totally bereft of heroes in both the school book and the popular versions of their past, but, in an odd coincidence, their common thread has been a powerful detestation of Canada as it was and as it would become. In Toronto, civic officials now celebrate William Lyon Mackenzie, whose rebellion could only have led to the incorporation of Upper Canada in the United States. We atone for the judicial murder of Louis Riel by condoning and even praising his judicial murder of the Canadian, Thomas Scott. We make a libertarian folk hero out of a man who, if we can believe Thomas Flanagan's careful study of Riel's writings, wanted to establish a highly personal theocracy on the banks of the South Saskatchewan.[8] One might add the name of Dr. Norman Bethune to this pantheon of national figures, although his stature was achieved only after he had cheerfully shaken the dust of Canada from his feet.

One can, in every case, sympathise with the rebels and understand their sense of grievance. One cannot, however, pretend that their individual or collective struggle represents a unifying myth for all Canada or even for that purported Anglo-Canadian nation which constitutional convenience needs for the achievement of duality. One can only envy Canon Groulx, concocting a Dollard des Ormeaux from such unpromising materials: "Lève-toi donc, ô Dollard, vivant sur ton socle de granit. Appelle-nous avec ton charme viril, avec tes accents de héros."[9] There are few such heroes on granite pedestals in English-speaking Canada.

8 See Thomas Flanagan, *Louis "David" Riel: Prophet of the New World* (Toronto, 1979), p. 138, *et seq*.

9 Lionel Groulx, *Dix Ans d'Action Française* (Montréal, 1926), p. 122.

Il y eut un temps où mon propre domaine en histoire militaire fut consciemment orienté vers la découverte de héros. Une rhétorique symbolique des plus réconfortantes fut répandue sur ce couple mal assorti que formaient Isaac Brock et Charles-Michel d'Irumberry de Salaberry. Selon le dicton d'Ernest Renan, nous réaliserions notre destin national: "Avoir des gloires communes dans le passé, une volonté commune dans le présent; avoir fait de grandes choses ensemble; vouloir en faire encore, voilà les conditions essentielles pour être un peuple."[10] Quand il présenta son projet de loi sur la nouvelle milice canadienne, en 1868, Sir George-Etienne Cartier exprima clairement son avis selon lequel les institutions militaires seraient un trait essentiel de cette "nouvelle nation" que lui et D'Arcy McGee avaient préconisée avec l'adresse oratoire, quoique dissemblable, qui était la leur.

Notre illustre collègue, le professeur Charles Stacey, suggéra à cette Société, il y a dix ans, que les entreprises militaires du Canada à l'étranger montraient un fort désir nationaliste, du moins parmi les Canadiens anglophones, de figurer sur la scène mondiale.[11] Malheureusement, ce fait perceptible au premier coup d'oeil à quiconque suivrait ces Canadiens en croisade tout au long de leurs voyages impériaux, n'a jamais été accepté par leurs contemporains francophones. Nous avons fait de grandes choses mais nous ne les avons pas faites ensemble. En tentant de réconcilier nos différences après l'événement, nous nous consacrions à l'étude approfondie de ces exploits plutôt qu'à celle de nos exploits communs. Nous examinions les crises de conscription et non pas le phénomène extraordinaire de cette armée d'amateurs qu'était le Corps Expéditionnaire Canadien.

In recent years, the pervasive impact of the war experience on the economy, government, social mores, and cultural institutions of Canada and its regions has become a focus for some of the most sophisticated historical study in Canada. The excellent official histories of Canadian wartime policy and of Canada's army have been supplemented by the work of able colleagues like Michael Bliss, William Young, Ruth Pierson, John Thompson, Craig Brown, and, very soon, Jean-Pierre Gagnon. However, their work will not create from Canada's war experience a national myth to unite Canadians. Indeed, as typical Canadians, they would shudder at the possibility. Instead, true to the character of Canada, those who now write of our war experience have focussed on diversity and division, on the specifics of race and region and sex. By their overdue integration of the war experience into the mainstream of Canadian historiography, they have been true to the current pattern: a history of limited perspectives appropriate to what Maurice Careless has christened a Canada of "limited identities".

There are great benefits from this development, whether in the history of war or any other theme. A historiography which bases itself on the vital entities of region, ethnicity, class, sex, and language can offer each of us the kind of identity and self-awareness once reserved for the influential and their disciples. There are other vantage points from which to interpret Canada than Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal. A

10 Ernest Renan, "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?", *Discours et conférences* (Paris, 1887), p. 306.

11 C.P. Stacey, "Nationality: The Canadian Experience", *Historical Papers*, (1969), p. 18.

smaller, narrower focus can foster new methodologies and insights inappropriate or, more often, overlooked in more traditional form.

However, when we turn back to our old concern with national identity, we see that there is a price to pay for our engagement with hyphenated history. In the absence of any over-arching sense of what Canada is, each form of history becomes an argument for the antagonisms, the sense of injustice and oppression and victimisation, the memories of past insults and defeats, which classes, regions, and racial groups nourish as the soul of their separateness. If historians in the Nineteenth Century served consciously as the ideologists of national unification, our own historians of class, region, and ethnicity appear implicitly dedicated to disintegration, fostering a sense of difference and grievance wholly disproportionate to any realistic hope of rectification. Accordingly, Canada as a whole ceases to be a structure in which we can seek our collective and individual aspirations. It becomes, instead, a prison cunningly rechristened "Ottawa" by the Task Force on National Unity. Canada becomes the explanation for the poverty of the Maritimes, the oppression of women, or the coercion of dissenters. It becomes, as "Ottawa", the source of those grievances and injustices which the authors of the Pépin-Robarts report assume that we shall all know without even being told.

Perhaps the narrowness of historical themes, so apparent in the recent lists of historical publications in Canada, is merely the natural consequence of the explosion in our field and of the relative youth of so many academic historians. Driven to publish and well aware that reputations are built more safely on a narrow basis of expertise, we have preferred to leave grand syntheses to journalists or old age. It is also apparent that the pattern of historical scholarship in Canada reflects the dissolution of the post-war Canadian consensus. Hyphenated history is the logical reflection of the growth of provincial power, the forceful assertion of important regional discontents, the acknowledgement of minority rights and of multiculturalism. In what, of all nations, could have been considered "Big Sky Country", Canadian historians have reflected society in their narrowing of horizons and limiting of identities.

Alors que l'histoire a aidé à former une conscience nationale dans le Canada-français, allant au-delà des difficultés et des différences sociales et régionales très importantes, il n'en fut pas ainsi dans le reste du Canada. Ceci n'est pas nécessairement une tragédie. Une nation, après tout, n'est qu'un acte de volonté, triomphant des autres volontés. Nous n'avons besoin que d'une connaissance minime de notre monde contemporain pour comprendre comment le processus peut être brutal. Il se peut que Lord Acton ait perdu toute faveur en tant que philosophe officiel depuis le 22 mai, mais, au moins une de ses observations possède une validité constante:

> The co-existence of several nations in the same state is a test, as well as the best security of its freedom. It is also one of the chief instruments of civilization and as such it is in the natural and providential order and indicates a state of greater advancement than the national unity which is the ideal of modern liberalism.[12]

12 Lord Acton, "Nationality", *The Home and Foreign Review*, I (July 1862), reprinted in *Essays on Freedom and Power* (Cleveland, 1955), p. 160.

L'histoire a fait du Canada une pluralité, non une dualité. Ceci est un jugement visant à offenser les deux groupes qui se considèrent comme les membres fondateurs de la Confédération. Il pourrait bien consterner les Canadiens-français parce que le thème constant de leurs historiens, juristes et hommes politiques a été que le statut et la survie du fait français au Canada dépendent du principe de dualité. Quelle que soit la différence numérique—et la disparité va s'accélérer dans les décennies à venir—la dualité implique la justice naturelle de l'égalité et de la réciprocité entre les deux partenaires. C'est la logique de la souveraineté-association aussi bien que la complexité des propositions constitutionnelles appuyées par Messieurs Robarts et Pépin, parce que chacun des partenaires bénéficierait alors de cette égalité théorique dont jouissent les pouvoirs souverains dans la loi internationale. N'être qu'une minorité parmi des minorités c'est ne pouvoir jouir ni de la distinction ni de la prérogative.

Historians, forever in pursuit of analogy, might compare the choices before Quebec to those which once faced Canada within the British Empire: to pursue the will o' the wisp of Imperial Federation or to become, as a lonely and disparaged J.S. Ewart urged, a Kingdom of Canada. Yet Canada, in the Edwardian Empire, played a peripheral and feeble role; within Confederation, Quebec has played a central and frequently a determining part. If Canada has failed to develop or even be tempted by the concept of a monolithic *anglophonie*, surely the pattern of federalism and of central government, which the presence of a united *francophonie* has dictated, must take the major credit.

As scholars, historians have no special claim to prophetic gifts. We can only report experience. We could also, if we chose, remind our community both of its achievements and of the continuities in human behaviour. We can focus on our limited identities and our hyphenated histories or we can remind our community that countries do not easily or peacefully dissolve.

Disintegration would be an inglorious end of the Confederation dream. Others would remember what perhaps we have been reluctant to recall: there have been splendid achievements in Confederation and innumerable dreams have come true. Quite apart from the achievements of Canadian individualism and business enterprize, on which I am ill-qualified to speak, there are the incredible accomplishments of co-operative effort and legislative innovation. Here in Saskatchewan, in circumstances of frequent adversity, the creativity of people forced by circumstances to work together has been magnificently illustrated. Yet Saskatchewan is not unique in a country which has generated the Antigonish movement, the *caisses populaires*, and that extraordinary brand of chamber-of-commerce socialism found only in British Columbia. This is diversity in unity, all of it accomplished within an old but remarkably adaptable constitutional framework which we are now urged to scrap.

Would it be wrong, while there is still time, to seek again for a synthesis of Canada as a whole, perhaps as a valedictory exercise, perhaps to defend the validity of our separate parts, perhaps to understand what we have created of value before it is sacrificed in political manipulation.

Notre Confédération n'est pas une création infantile ou passagère. A cent douze ans, cette "nouvelle nation" a vécu à peine un peu moins de temps que cela n'en a pris

pour établir le fait français en Amérique du nord. Si ce fait français est devenu, heureusement, un des éléments les plus entêtés de la mosaïque humaine, pourquoi supposerions-nous que la Confédération puisse disparaître comme la neige?

Une des réponses viendra peut-être d'un Lord Durham contemporain: nous sommes, nous les Canadiens du vingtième siècle, également un peuple sans histoire et sans culture. Ou, plutôt, nous avons trop d'histoires différentes et même opposées. Ma réplique est courte: l'histoire n'est pas un don divin; c'est une création consciente, délibérée et humaine. Comme le Bas-Canada, lors des rébellions de 1837, le Canada moderne peut trouver des synthèses historiques capables d'épouser sa réalité.

Out of the scholarship of narrow fields and limited identities has come a richness and a depth of understanding which cries out to be incorporated in the common Canadian experience. It will be as different a synthesis as our own era differs from the centennial mood in which W.L. Morton set out his great model. Yet it will be as optimistic and as strong as this country, defying the prejudice and the mutual ignorance which has pervaded the recent debate about our future and from which the Task Force on National Unity could not escape infection.

It is vital, for the sake of this complex and fascinating country, that Canadian awareness and involvement in our history be heightened. We cannot afford the slow, generational conveyor belt which allowed our discoveries and interpretations to become the commonplaces of our students' students. It would be a significant misfortune if the Canadian Historical Association did not return to its chartered role as the voice of the entire historical interest in Canada. During the past year, we have begun to consider ways of making ourselves more valuable to those who share our concern with history, but who are now denied the privilege of professional involvement. We have begun the exploration of the possibility of commercial backing for a popular illustrated historical periodical in Canada. We have worked on closer relationships with history teachers in primary and secondary schools. We have set out, with the aid of the Committee on the Historical Profession, the first of a systematic series of briefs to the new granting council on our needs and priorities as historians.

All of this has been exhausting and altogether inadequate. An association dependent on busy and transient part-timers can only make symbolic and frequently futile gestures. In a series of cases, the chronic under-funding of the Association has prevented it from functioning as a professional association should, both in representing the interests of individual members and in speaking powerfully and punctually for the collectivity.

As a partial and transitional answer to this problem, I have suggested a major change in the committee structure of the Association so that members of Council, divided into standing committees on internal and external affairs, may play a continuing and vastly more effective role in the direction of the CHA. If this recommendation is accepted, service on the Council will become very much more demanding and onerous. It will also become more significant. At present levels of funding, each standing committee can probably hope to meet three times in addition to the annual meetings. With each committee composed of half of the current executive and Council, it will be possible for both continuity and rotation to work their respective benefits.

This cannot be the end of change. If our national Association is to serve historians in Canada, whether in teaching, public service, or in personal fulfilment, we must consider the need for a permanent secretariat. This Association has been content, unknowingly, to extract the last ounce of sacrifice from those few dedicated people who have served as our secretaries and as treasurer. Such dedication is simply too exceptional for us to continue indefinitely to find qualified replacements.

Dans son état actuel, la Societé Historique du Canada représente d'abord des historiens professionnels, travaillant dans les universités ou pour les différents gouvernements. Ceci est un rôle légitime mais trop modeste. Il est en deça de ce que notre titre et les buts officiels, inscrits dans la constitution de notre Societé, suggèrent. C'est un rôle représentatif qui offre trop peu à nos collègues non spécialistes du Canada et presque rien aux enseignants des collèges et des écoles secondaires ainsi qu'à ceux qui partagent notre connaissance de l'histoire sans le bénéfice de l'affiliation institutionnelle.

As Canadians, we are entering a period when historical mythologies and fabrications will add to the tide of incomprehension and folly. A few isolated researchers and teachers cannot hope to battle the tide. It is time not only to seek out fresh interpretations of the Canadian and the wider human experience, but also to try, with new vigour, to communicate the civilizing awareness of history to the Canadian community.

"The past is not for living in." "It is a well of conclusions from which we can draw in order to act."[13] The time has come for this generation of historians in Canada to speak with public voices, for we have much to tell.

13 Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, p. 11.