

Does Canada Matter?

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The 1990 Kenneth R. MacGregor Lecturer

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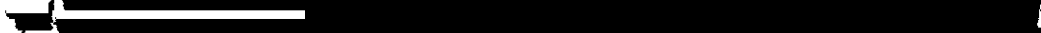










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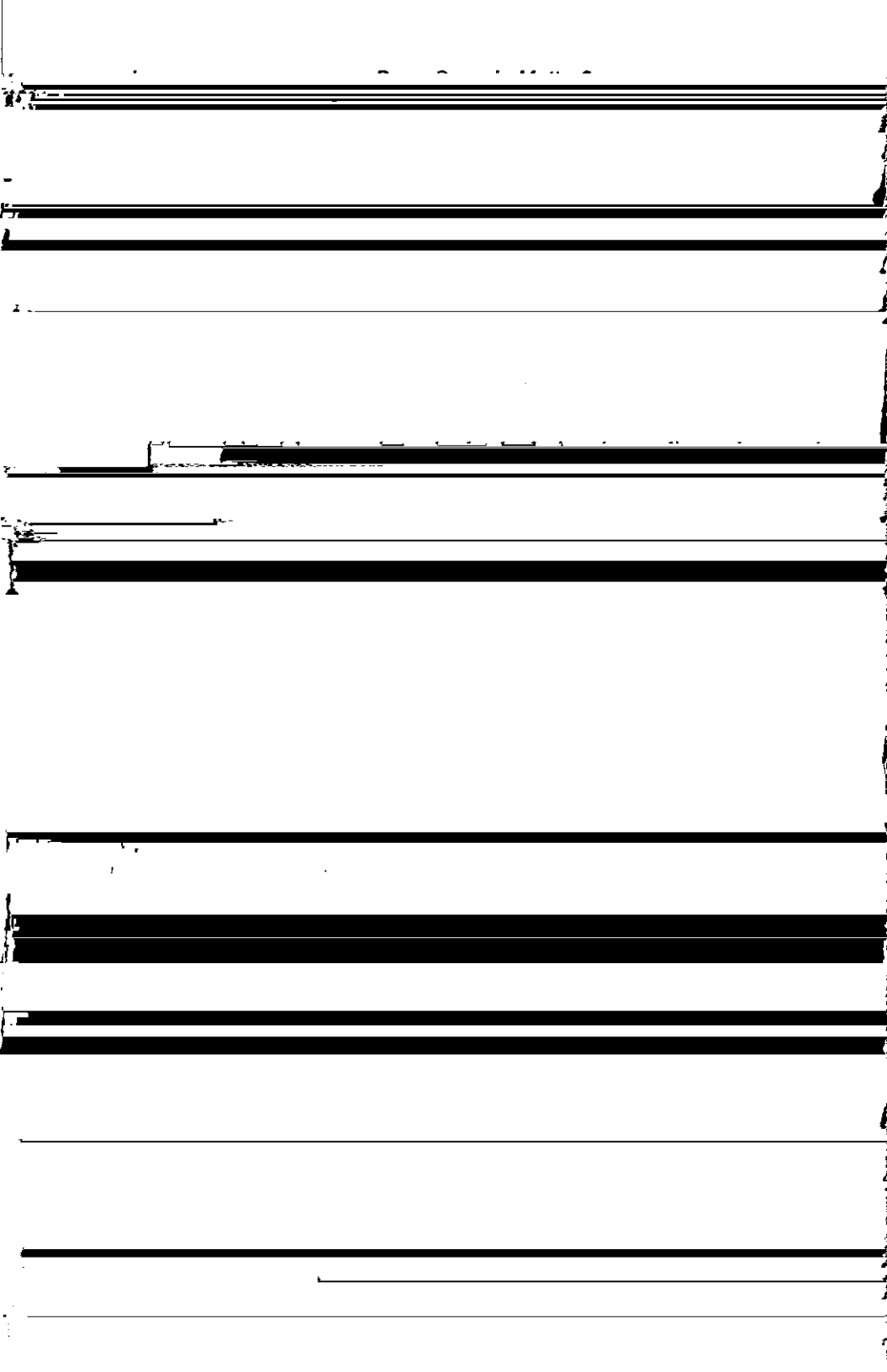
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FOREWORD

This publication is the revised text of a public address by Gordon Robertson as





SOMMAIRE

La conférence jette d'abord un éclairage sur les différentes approches de la situation constitutionnelle au Canada, c'est-à-dire nommément les perspectives québécoise et de l'Ouest avec, en toile de fond, l'exacerbation de la


ABSTRACT


The lecture begins with an analysis of the widely differing views of Canada's constitutional situation as seen in Quebec and in Western Canada, and of the added complications of the problems of federalism and of the


PREFATORY NOTE THE CRISIS DEEPENS

The two months since this lecture was delivered have seen a rapid sharpening of the constitutional crisis in Quebec. The events there have not altered the basic considerations I addressed on November 27, 1990 but they have narrowed the options for Canada.

The submissions to the Bélanger-Campeau Commission during December and January remained overwhelmingly sovereigntist. Federalism had few de-







DOES CANADA MATTER?

INTRODUCTION

The 1. 1. in in the five months since

the years 1981 to 1989 ... in December 1985 ...

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amendment to the constitution. The importance of the clause was two-fold. Symbolically, it would give constitutional recognition to the unique society of Quebec — the only province with a French speaking majority. Recognition of the English speaking minority in Quebec was there and was important, but it was for the French speaking majority, with over three hundred years of tenacious adherence to their language and culture, that the recognition was funda-

~~mental. It would be the first specific constitutional statement of that kind.~~

value could not be acceptable to Quebec. The distinct society clause was the least that could be done to meet it.

The double acceptance of federalism by Quebec in 1980 and in the "Five Points" of 1986 including what became the distinct society clause, followed by

THE VIEW FROM THE WEST

While opinions in the west differ, just as they do in Quebec, the preponderant

OUR CUP OVERFLOWS

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impression. The French speaking people of Quebec are well aware that the rights of the English speaking minority in Quebec far exceed those of the French

a separate Canada could then, it is argued, negotiate about the future, unhampered by the requirements of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

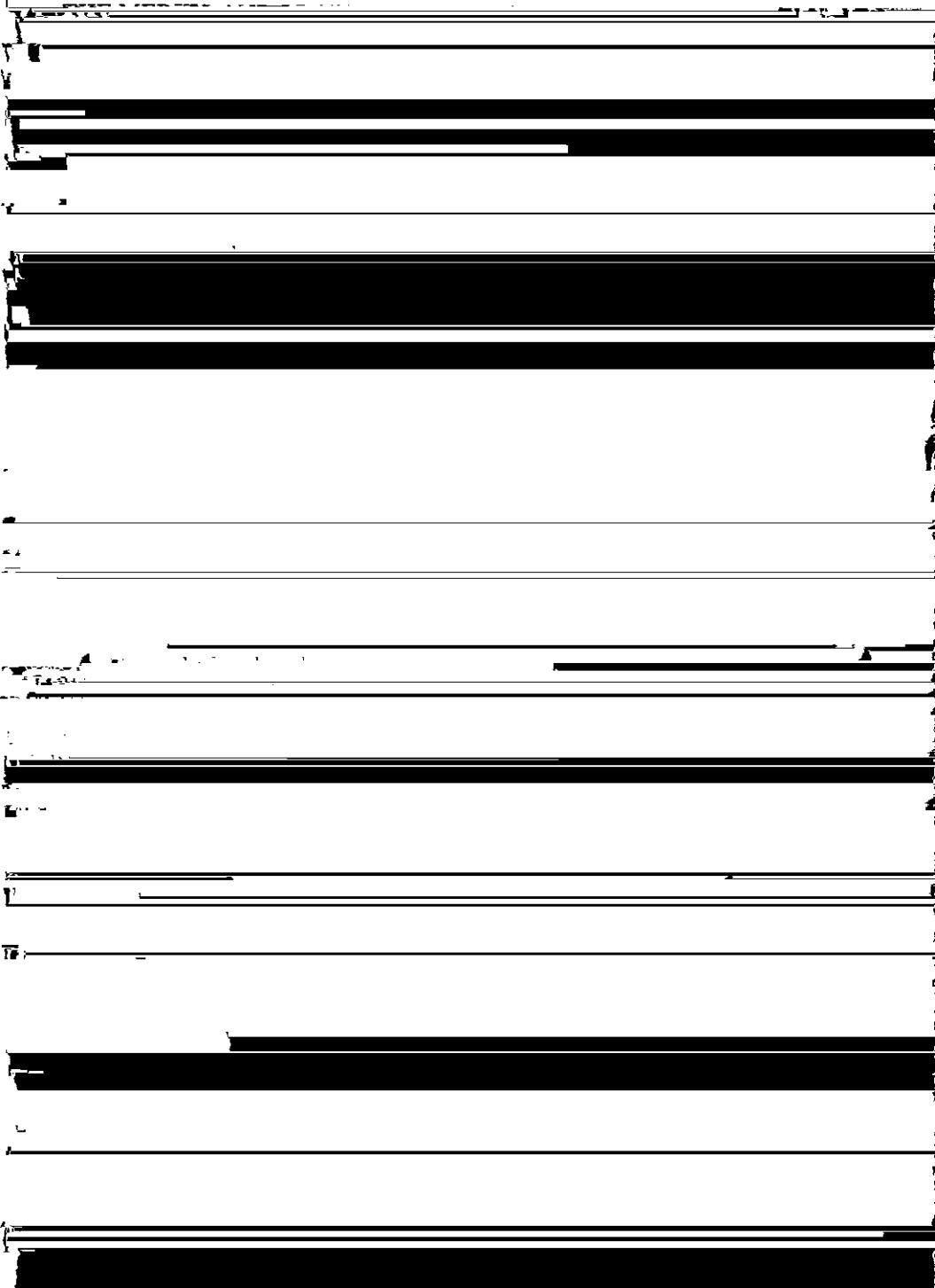
THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE

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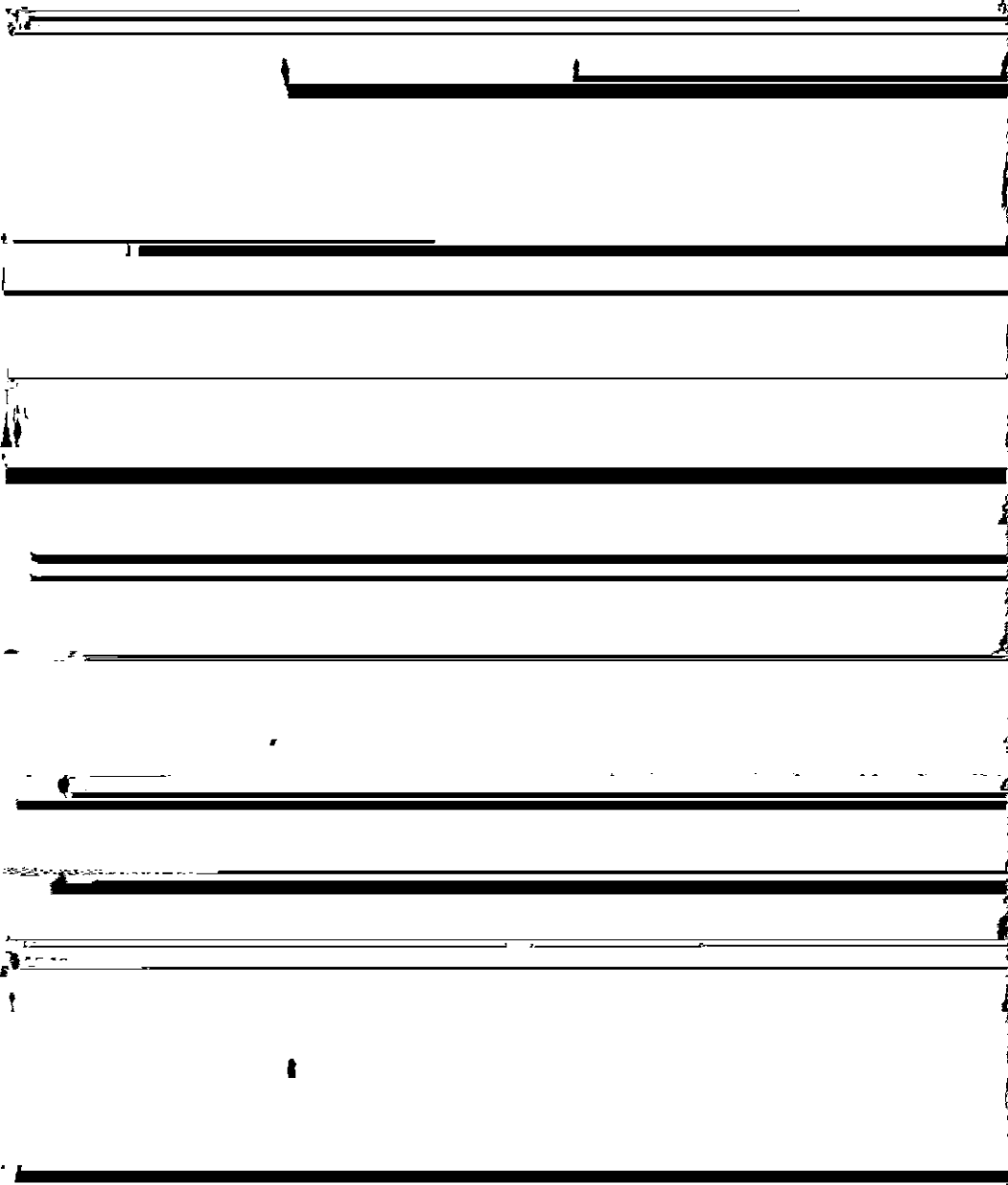
tional Accord, 1987, became one of the main points of criticism of the Accord. It was alleged by critics to weaken the federal government too greatly, especially in its capacity to act in areas of social policy and income security



Europe goes forward, but we need not go all the way back to the kind of
situation the European Community is designed to prevent

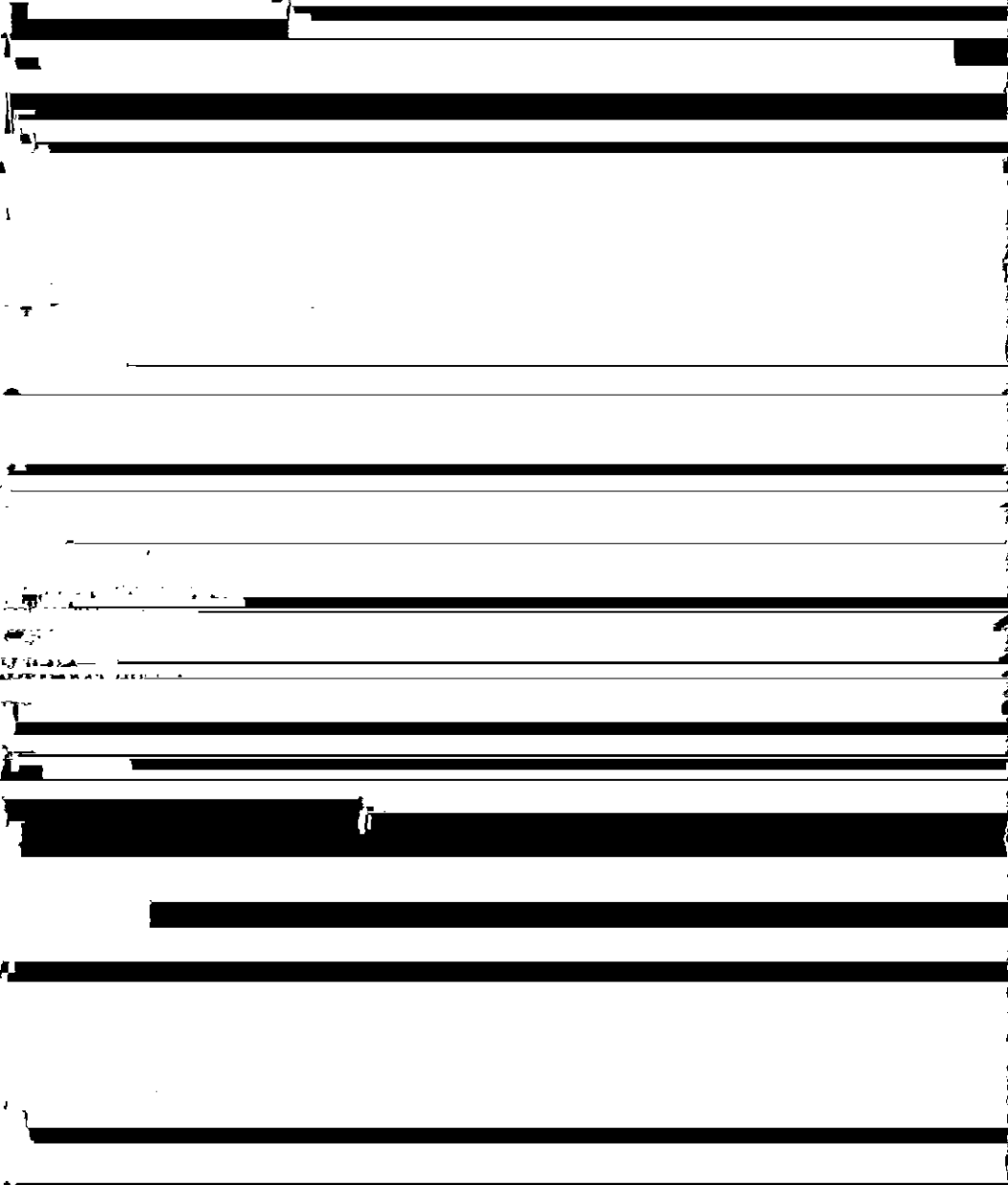


of Canada." What they are has yet to be determined, but by the section they "are hereby recognized and affirmed." The education rights of linguistic minorities as special groups within provinces are also recognized and spelled out in section



provinces in general would be a wise solution in the highly competitive, fast moving world of tomorrow.

The greatest difficulty in the third option *some form of*



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