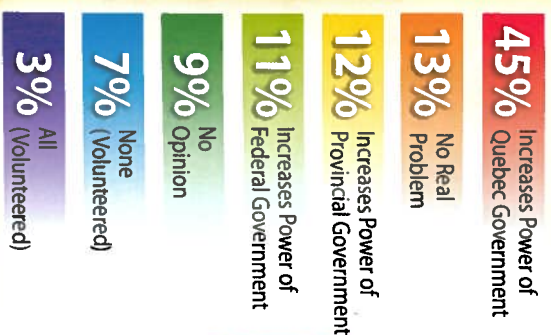


The Problem with Meech Lake



Results of a Decima Research poll on Canadians' reservations about the Meech Lake Accord.
What impact do you think this opinion poll would have on Quebec? On other Canadians? Explain.

One member of the Manitoba legislature, Elijah Harper, a Cree, opposed the agreement because it did not recognize Aboriginal peoples as an equal partner. Using procedural grounds, he stopped the Manitoba Legislative Assembly from approving the Meech agreement. Without the approval of all provinces, the agreement was dead.

Using the evidence here, do you think it was good or bad for Canada that the Meech Lake Accord did not pass? Explain, giving arguments to support your views.

Polling Canadian Attitudes, November–December 1990

51% of Canadians willing to let Quebec go: Poll

Source: *Montreal Gazette*, December 31, 1990, p. A1.

The rest of Canada should just sit back and let Quebec separate if that's what Quebecers want, most Canadians say in a poll.

The poll, conducted by Decima Research Ltd. for *Maclean's* magazine, indicates 51 percent of Canadians think Canada should "just let them go" if Quebecers wish to separate. Forty-seven percent think the rest of Canada should do "everything it can" to persuade Quebecers to stay, while 2 percent have no opinion.

In the regional breakdown, 51 percent of Quebecers also said the rest of Canada should let Quebec go its own way. And as 1990 draws to a close, the vast majority of Quebecers—68 percent—believe Quebec likely will be a separate country before the decade is over. In the rest of Canada, however, only 38 percent hold the same view. ... Decima also asked Canadians to weigh various

constitutional options and, again, found sharp differences of opinion between Quebecers and other Canadians.

Twenty-two percent of Quebecers, for example, favour the existing federal system with special powers for Quebec. Only 3 percent of other Canadians support that vision.

In contrast, 41 percent of other Canadians like the idea of retaining the federal system with much more power for each province. Only 18 percent of Quebecers share that opinion.

And 24 percent of other Canadians favour the constitutional status quo. That's the favoured option of only 14 percent of Quebecers. ...

Decima's poll was conducted among 1500 Canadians Nov. 1–16.

The Charlottetown Accord

In response to the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, Mulroney appointed a Citizen's Forum on Canada's Future. This commission found that Canadians were furious with their prime minister and premiers over their secret backroom deals.

The next attempt to get Quebec's participation in the constitution was the Charlottetown Accord. Nine premiers (less Quebec's Liberal Premier Robert Bourassa, who boycotted the meetings) and Prime Minister Mulroney met in Charlottetown, PEI in August 1992. In addition to recognizing Aboriginal self-government in principle, the Charlottetown Accord included the components outlined in Evidence 8.16.

In your own words, summarize the survey's findings. Based on this evidence, do you agree with the results? Why or why not?

Consensus Report on the Constitution (also known as the Charlottetown Accord; see previous page)

Charlottetown, August 28, 1992

- I. Canada Clause
A new clause should be included as Section 2 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* that would express fundamental Canadian values. The Canada Clause would guide the courts in their future interpretation of the entire Constitution, including the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. ...
- II. INSTITUTIONS
 - A. The Senate ...
 - 7. An Elected Senate ...
 - 8. An Equal Senate ...
 - 9. Aboriginal Peoples' Representation in the Senate
- IV. First Peoples ...
- A. THE INHERENT RIGHT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT
 - 41. The Inherent Right of Self-Government

The Constitution should be amended to recognize that the Aboriginal peoples of Canada have the inherent right of self-government within Canada. This right should be placed in a new section of *Constitution Act, 1982*, Section 35.1(1).

Quebec

Referendum, 1995

With the failure of an agreement between Quebec and the rest of Canada, the new PQ government of Jacques Parizeau decided to hold another referendum on Quebec independence on October 30, 1995.

Referendum Question, 1995

Do you agree that Quebec should become sovereign, after having made a formal offer to Canada for a new economic and political partnership, within the scope of the bill respecting the future of Quebec and of the agreement signed on June 12, 1995 [between the Bloc Québécois, Parti Québécois, and Action démocratique du Québec to proclaim Quebec a sovereign country]?

The question made no reference to Quebec as an independent country.

What does this fact suggest about the PQ's concerns regarding the results of the referendum?

PROVINCE	VOTES		VOTER TURNOUT (%)
	YES	NO	
Newfoundland	63.2	36.8	53.3
Nova Scotia	48.8	51.2	67.8
Prince Edward Island	73.9	26.1	70.5
New Brunswick	61.8	38.2	72.2
Quebec	43.3	56.7	82.8
Ontario	50.1	49.9	71.9
Manitoba	38.4	61.6	70.6
Saskatchewan	44.7	55.3	68.7
Alberta	39.8	60.2	72.6
British Columbia	31.7	68.3	76.7
Northwest Territories	61.3	38.7	70.4
Yukon	43.7	56.3	70.0
FEDERAL TOTALS	45.7	54.3	71.8

Sources: Chief Electoral Officer for Canada and Directeur général des élections du Québec.