

**Ethnonationalism in a
Federal State:
The Case of Canada**

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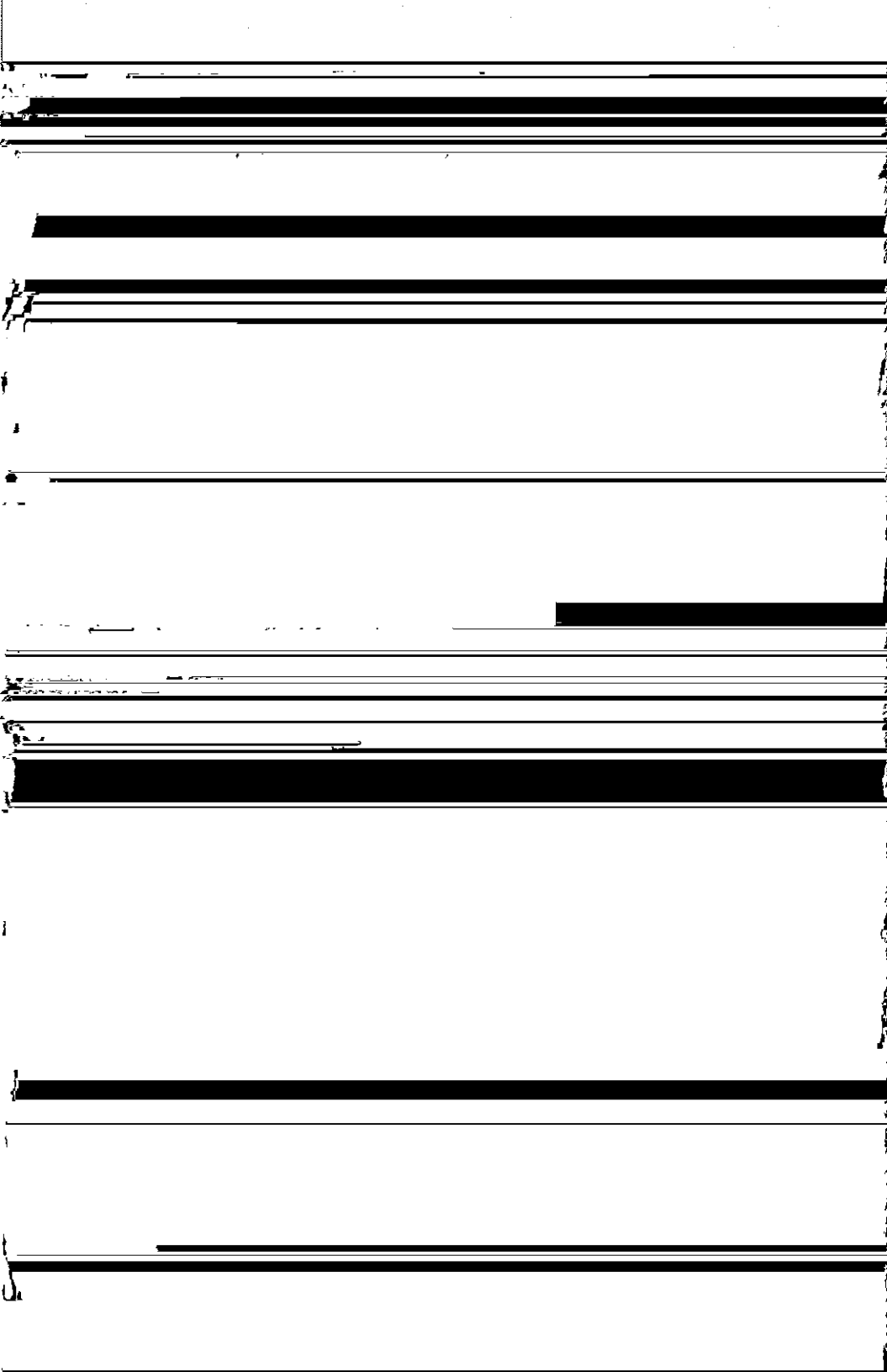
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Ethnonationalism in a federal state

PREFACE

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which making concessions simply encourages the formulation of more extreme demands?

These questions, less abstractly put, have been prominent in Canadian

Table 1
 CANADA: Population, Income, Ethnic Origins and Language by Province—
 1981

| | <i>Population (thousands)</i> | <i>Per Capita Income (index)</i> | <i>Ethnic Origins (%)</i> | | | <i>Home Language (%)</i> | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | | | <i>British</i> | <i>French</i> | <i>Other</i> | <i>English</i> | <i>French</i> | <i>Other</i> |
| Atlantic Region | | | | | | | | |
| Newfoundland | 564 | 65.3 | 92 | 3 | 5 | 99.3 | 0.2 | 0.1 |

cent reside in Quebec.⁴ Quebec is the only province with a francophone majority (83 per cent).

The francophone minorities are spread through every province, but are concentrated in areas bordering on Quebec. To the east lies the province of New

and religion. The influx of English and Scots, considerably augmented by "loyalists" fleeing the American revolution, was rapid enough that it soon made English the majority language,⁶ as well as (by virtue of conquest) the economically, politically, and socially dominant one; however, the high birth rate among the *Canadiens* ensured that French remained the majority language in Lower Canada, later Quebec. The present-day francophone population of 5,257,000 consists overwhelmingly of the descendants of the 60,000 who remained after the British conquest.

That there are nearly six million francophones in Canada is not only a

⁶Not only to the fecundity of their ancestors, but to the French Canadian habit of

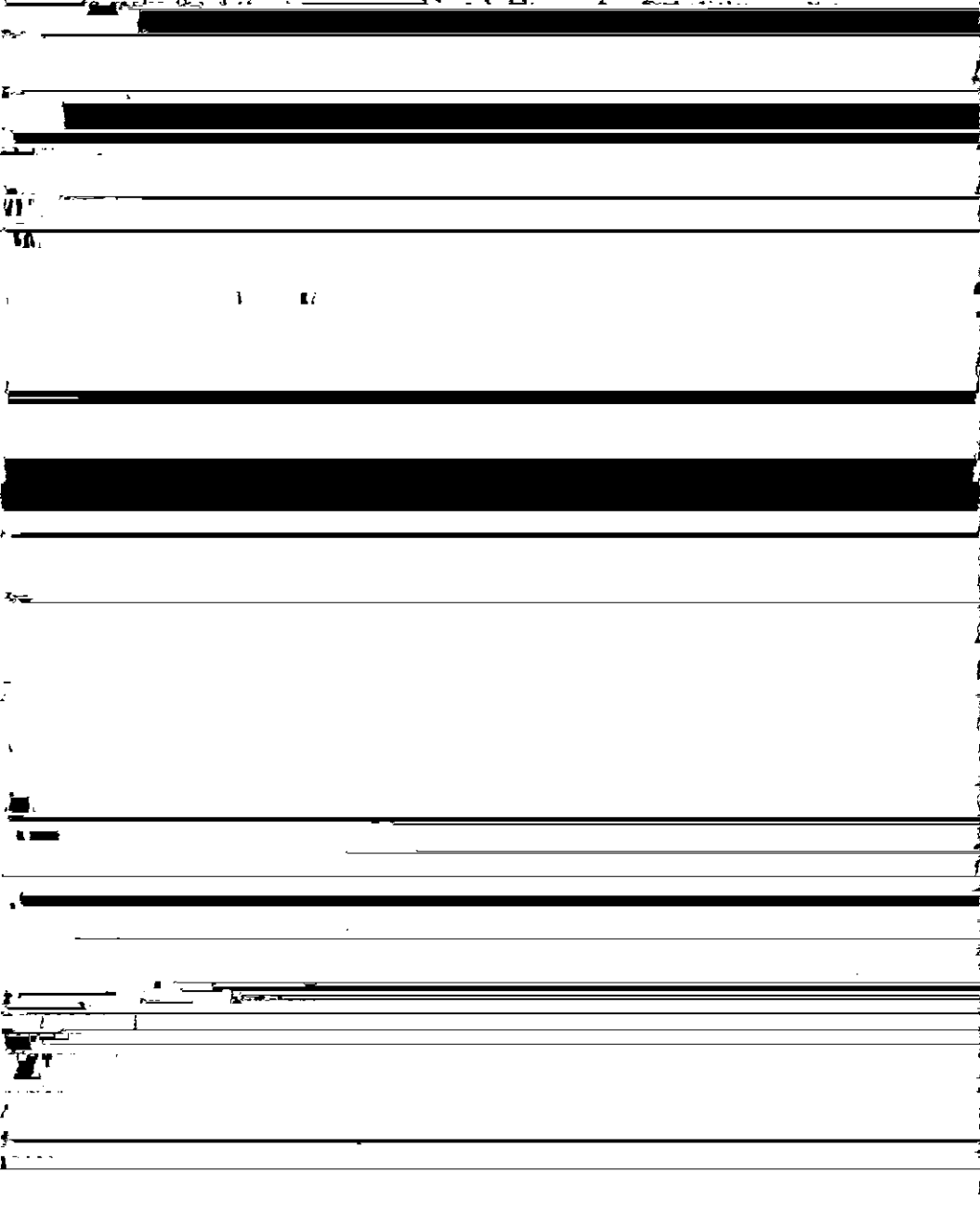
pendence or indeed to any substantial degree of autonomy. Nor does any other non-aboriginal group show any desire for separateness, if we except a few small agricultural communities of religious sects that have rejected all forms of modernization and have sought to withdraw, to the extent possible, from the rest of Canadian society, and certainly from its public life. On the other hand, various

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1971-72, when a deliberate attempt was made to...

enclave-creating French Canadian nationalism. The leaders of this movement, notably Honoré Mercier (premier of Quebec, 1887-91), took the view that the

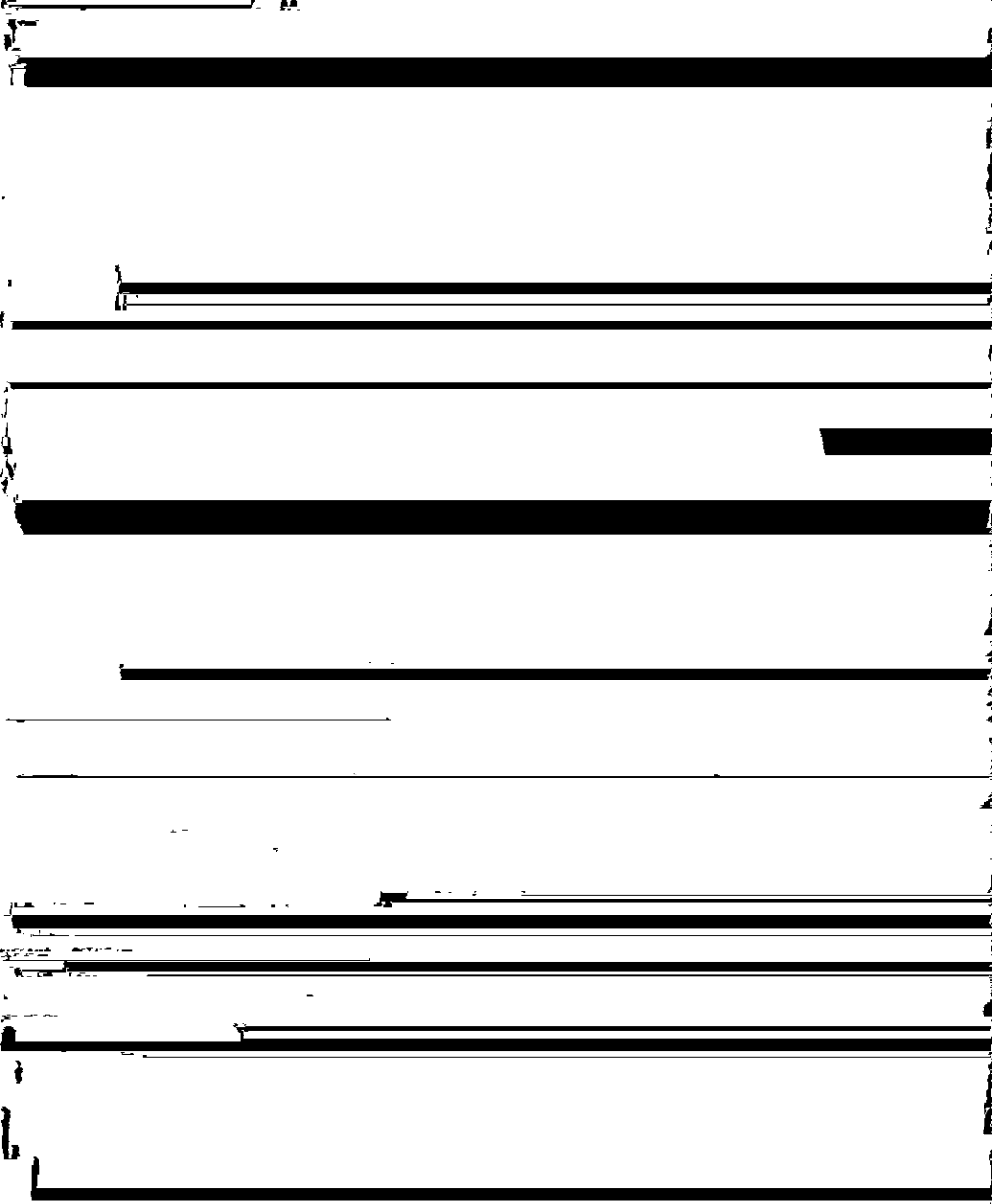
were regarded as mutually supporting; indeed, to the extent that it is possible

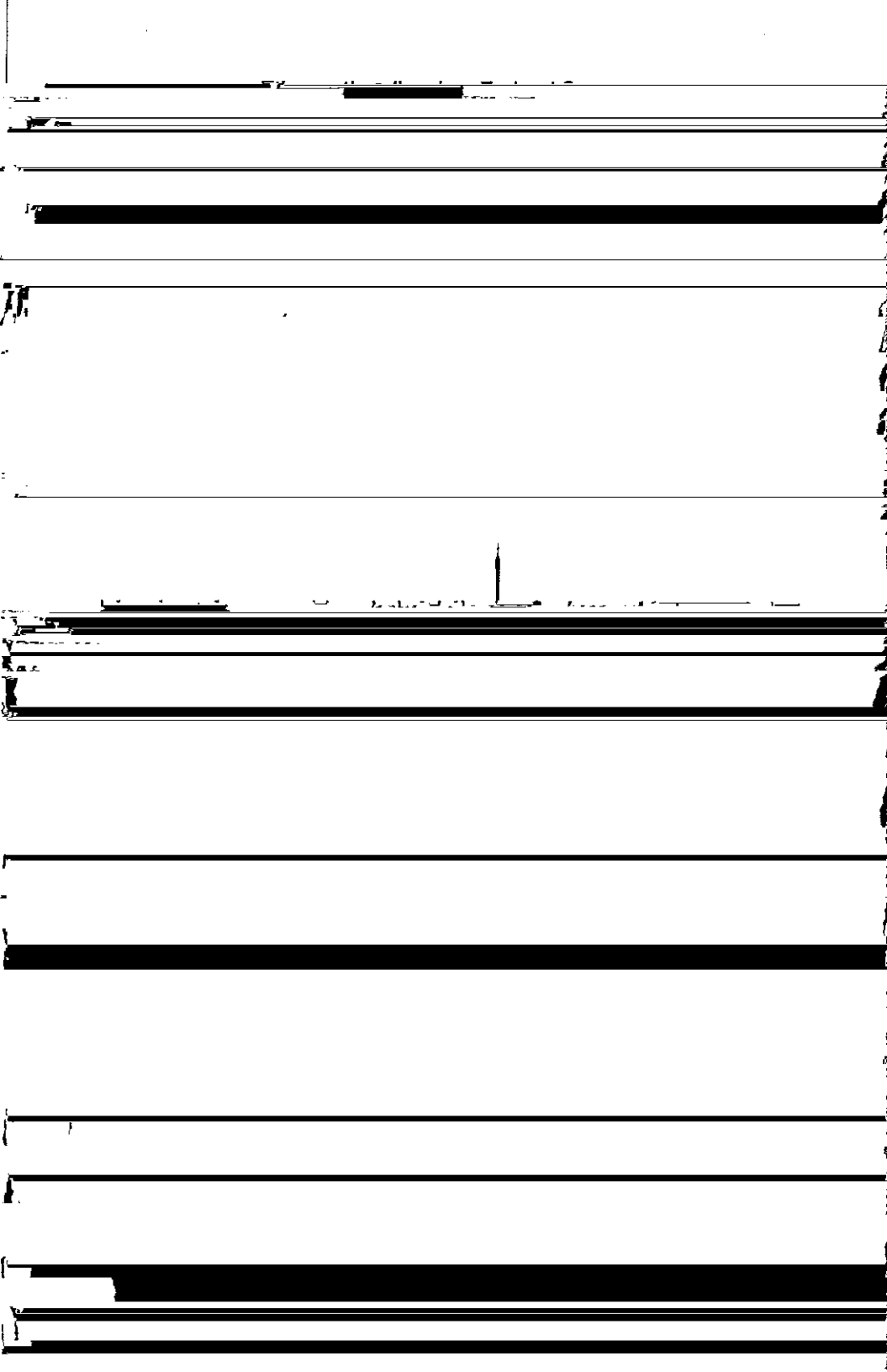


late ideas; less to light the furnaces of factories than to maintain and spread the glowing fires of religion and thought, and to help them cast their light into the dis-

The date of this study (1965), helps explain the widespread attention it

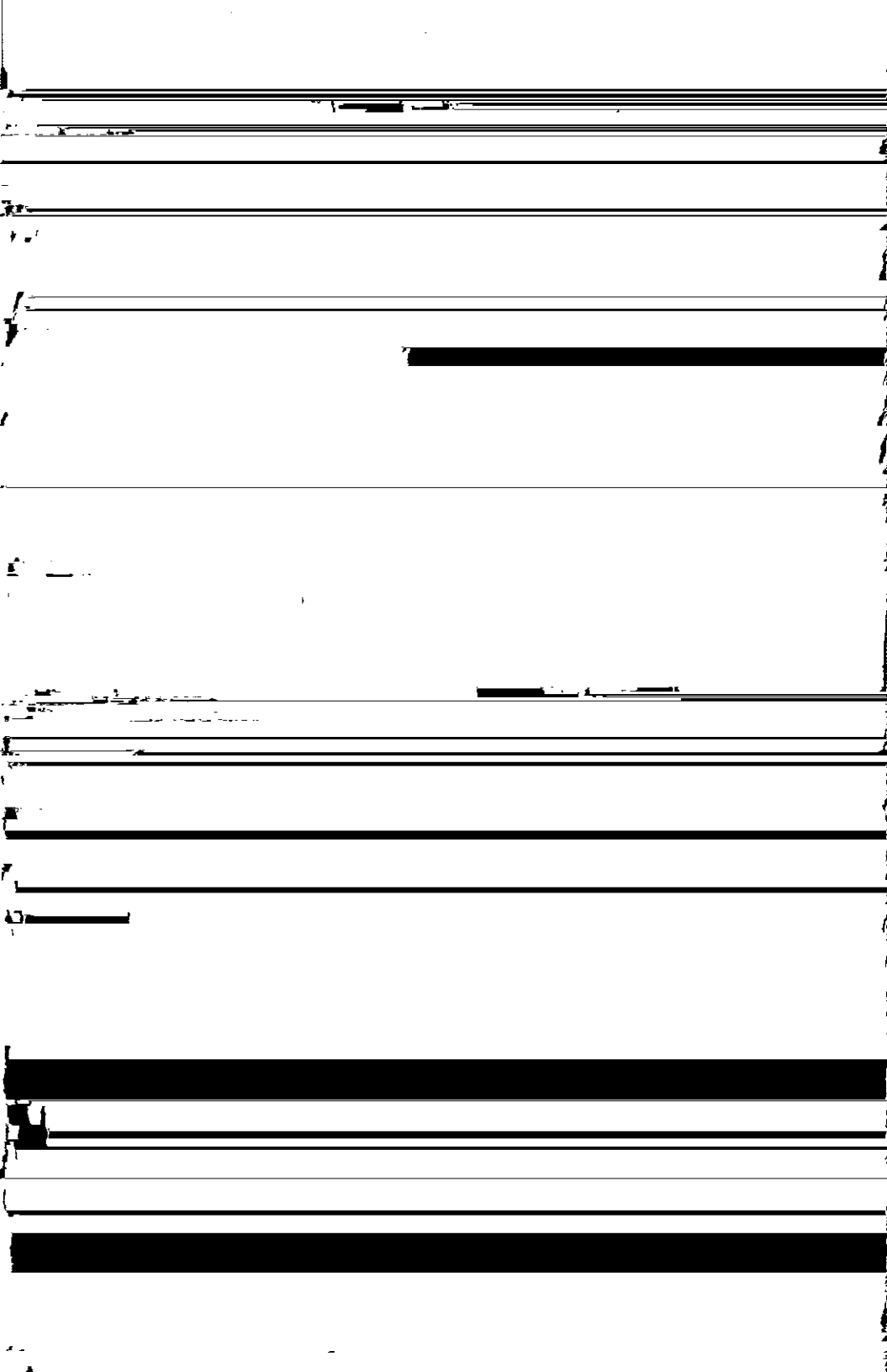
received (the author's findings in the dissertation). Quebec was already

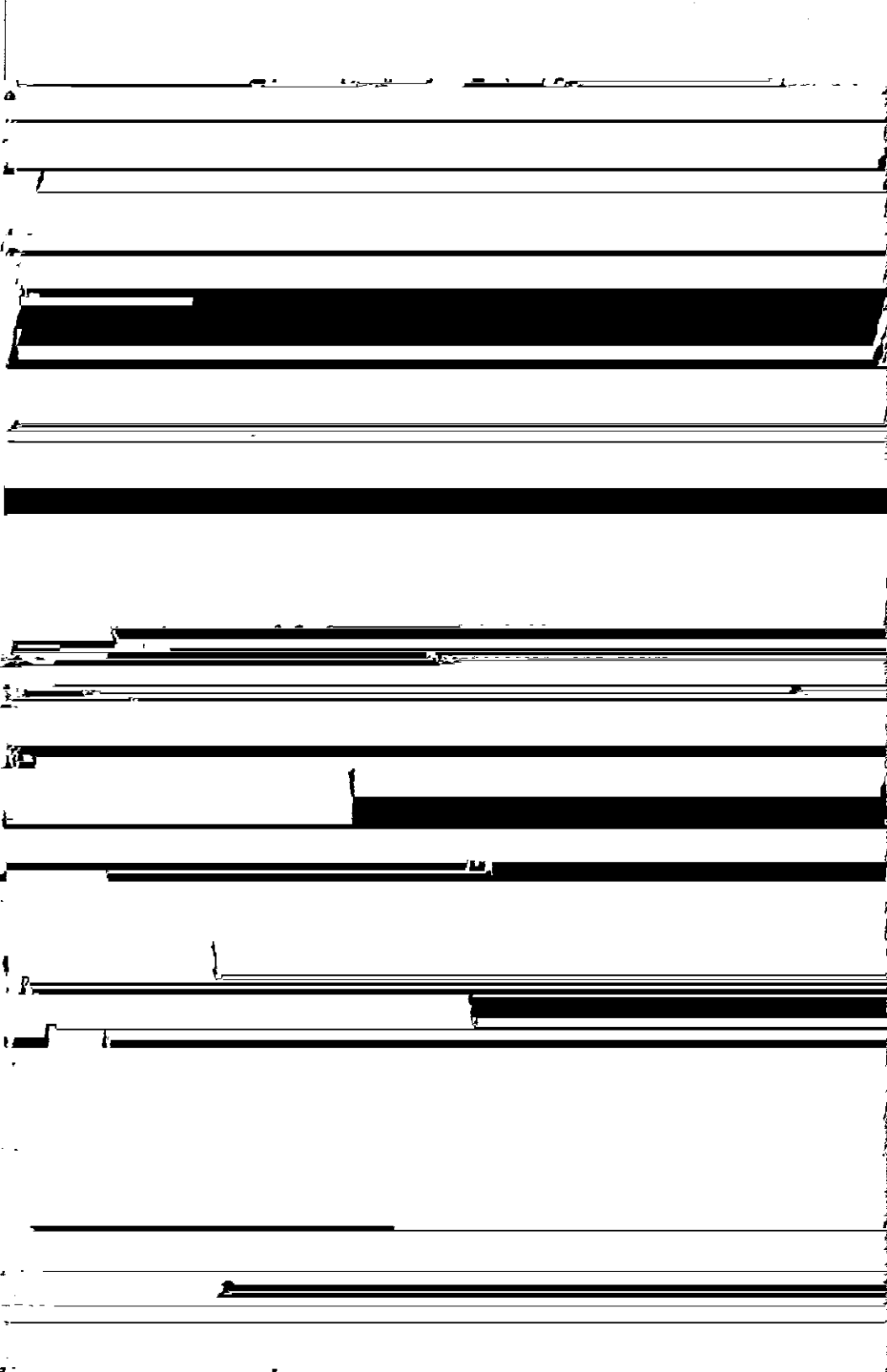




transformed into a more positive "social nationalism"¹⁵ or a "nationalism of

ing of mind toward outside currents of thought, a rejection of traditional

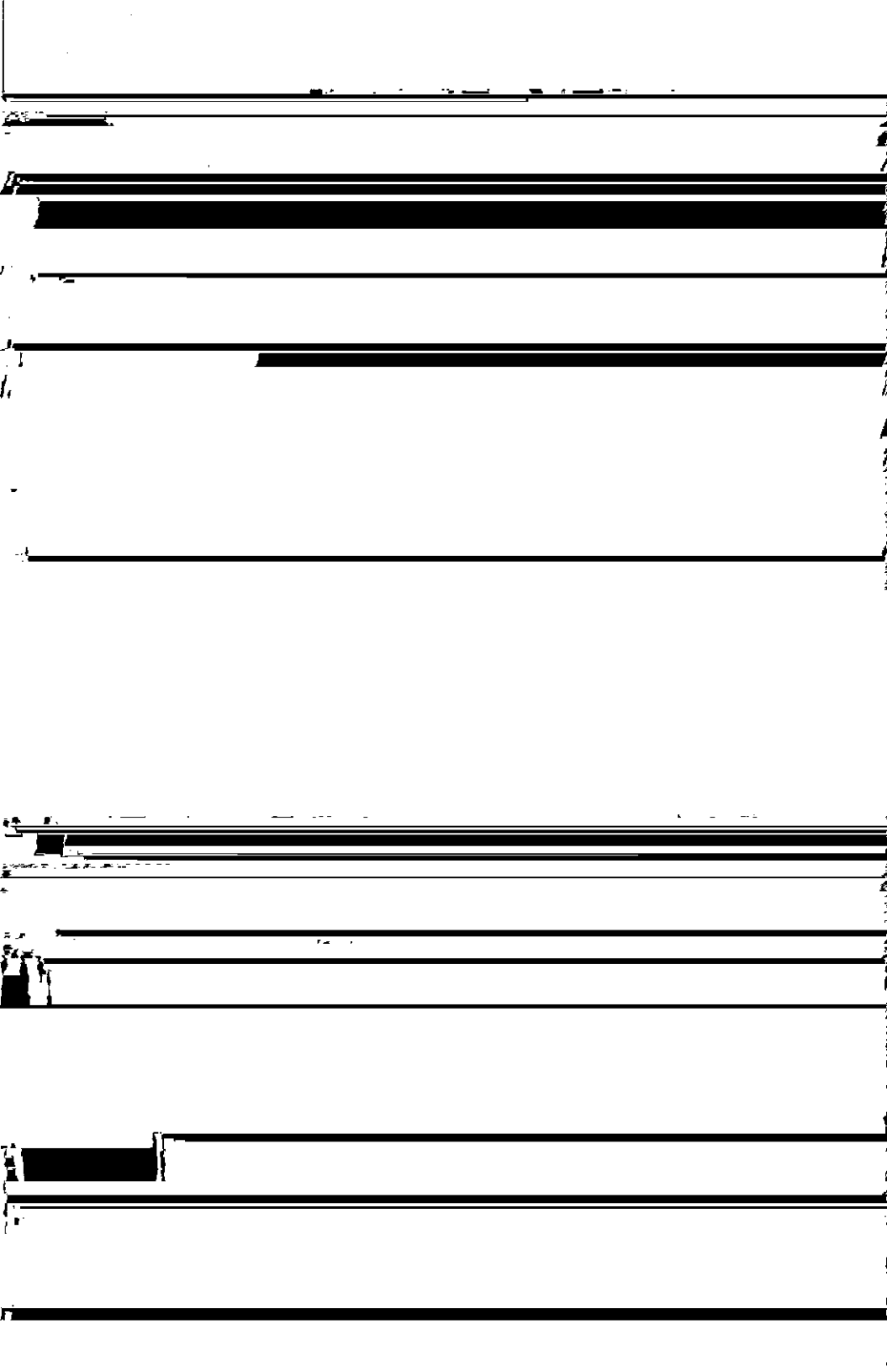




most of all to them.¹⁹ Thus it comes as a surprise that a poll conducted in November 1987 showed support for sovereignty-association at 44 per cent; another poll, restricted to the Quebec City area, asking respondents "Are you for or against the independence of Quebec?" yielded 28 per cent yes, 55 per cent no, and 17 per cent undecided.²⁰ Perhaps of equal interest is that these results appear not to have been reported outside the province. But it was ever thus: in English Canada the modal attitude toward nationalist demands emanating from Quebec (to the extent people have been aware of them) has been

an eight-month interlude in 1979-80, and Brian Mulroney, 1984 to present), and *rejection* (the Liberal governments of Pierre Trudeau, 1968-79 and 1980-84). Of these three types of response, it is the strategic choice between accommodation and rejection that interests us.

The accommodative response, as exhibited by Pearson and by a succession of Conservative Party leaders after Diefenbaker (Robert Stanfield, and then Clark and Mulroney) combined all three elements that were noted at the begin



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Trudeau's political career, which spanned the two decades from 1965 to 1984,

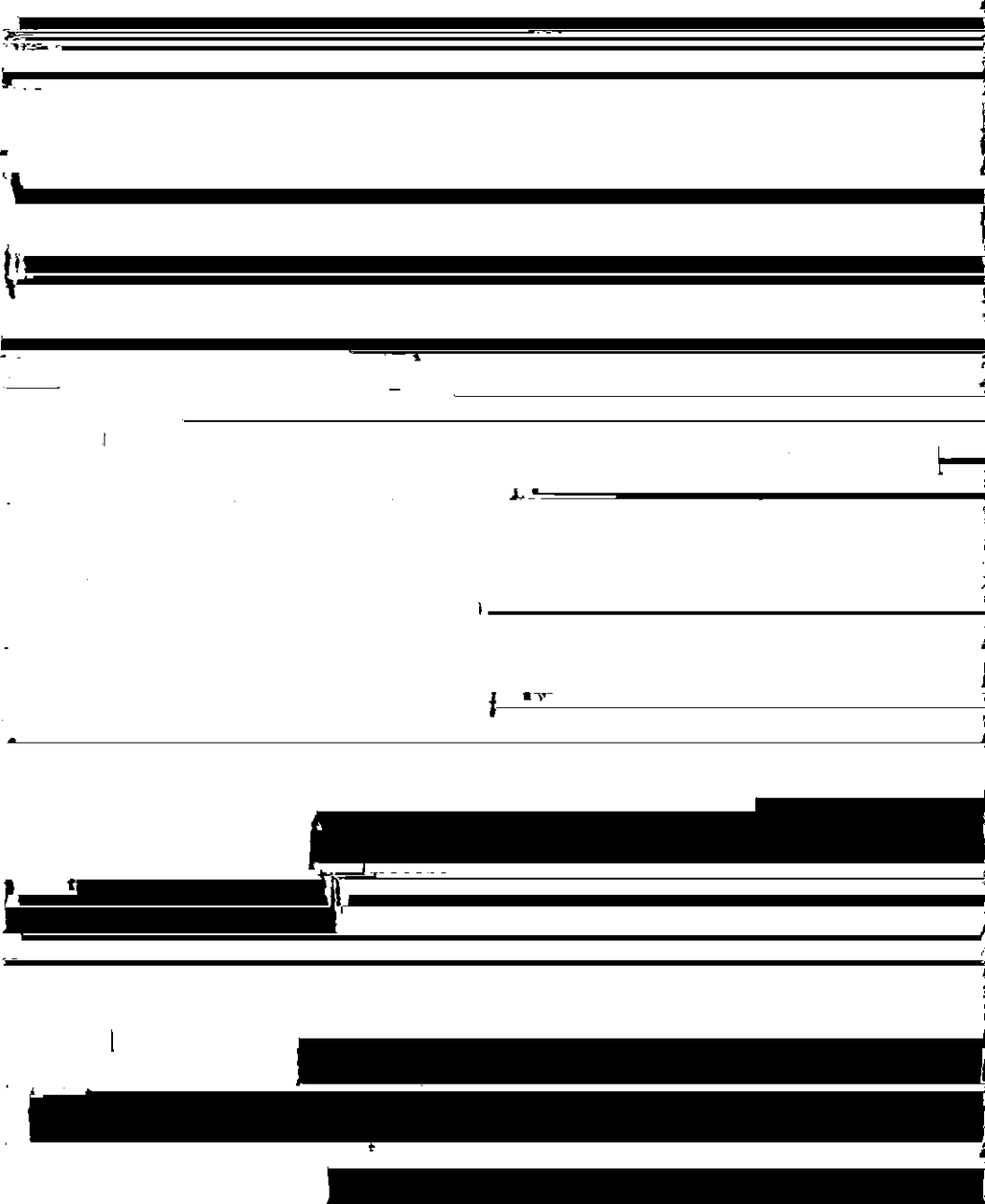


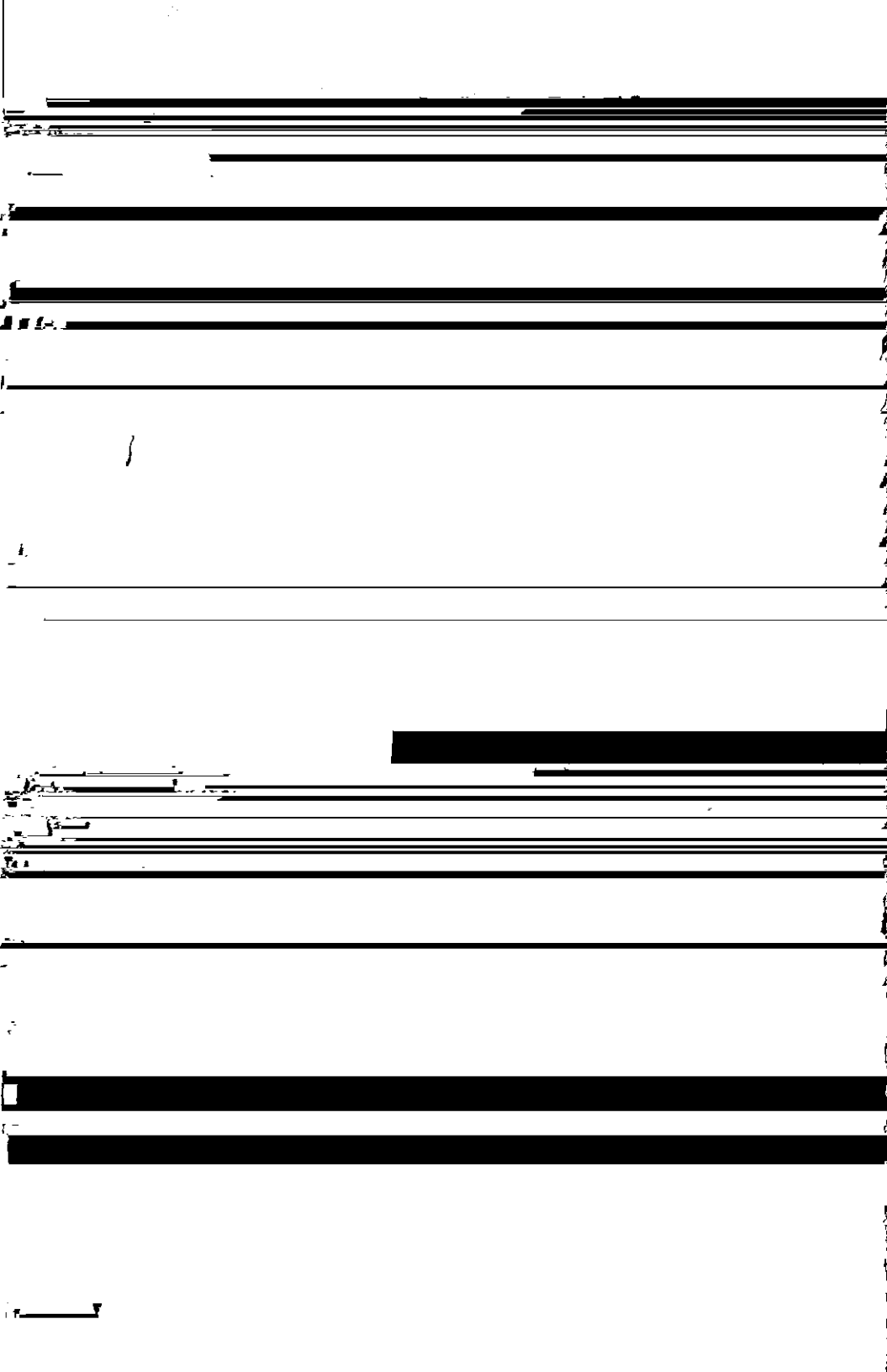
attributed all three aspects of the Trudeau policies, at least in part, to the strong francophone presence in the cabinet, and they developed a corresponding resentment of the extent of "French power" under his prime ministership.

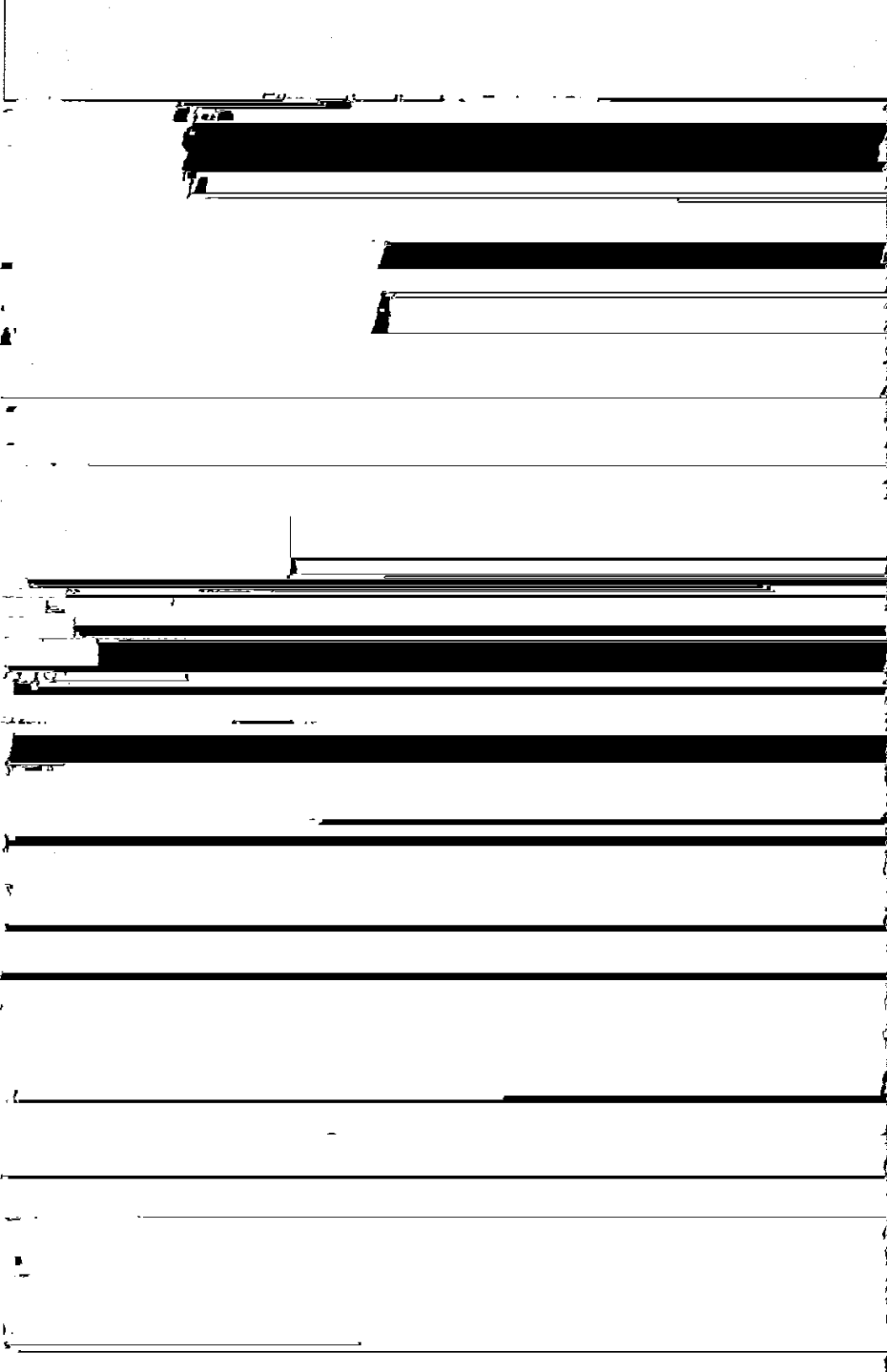
V — ETHNONATIONALISM, SEPARATISM, AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

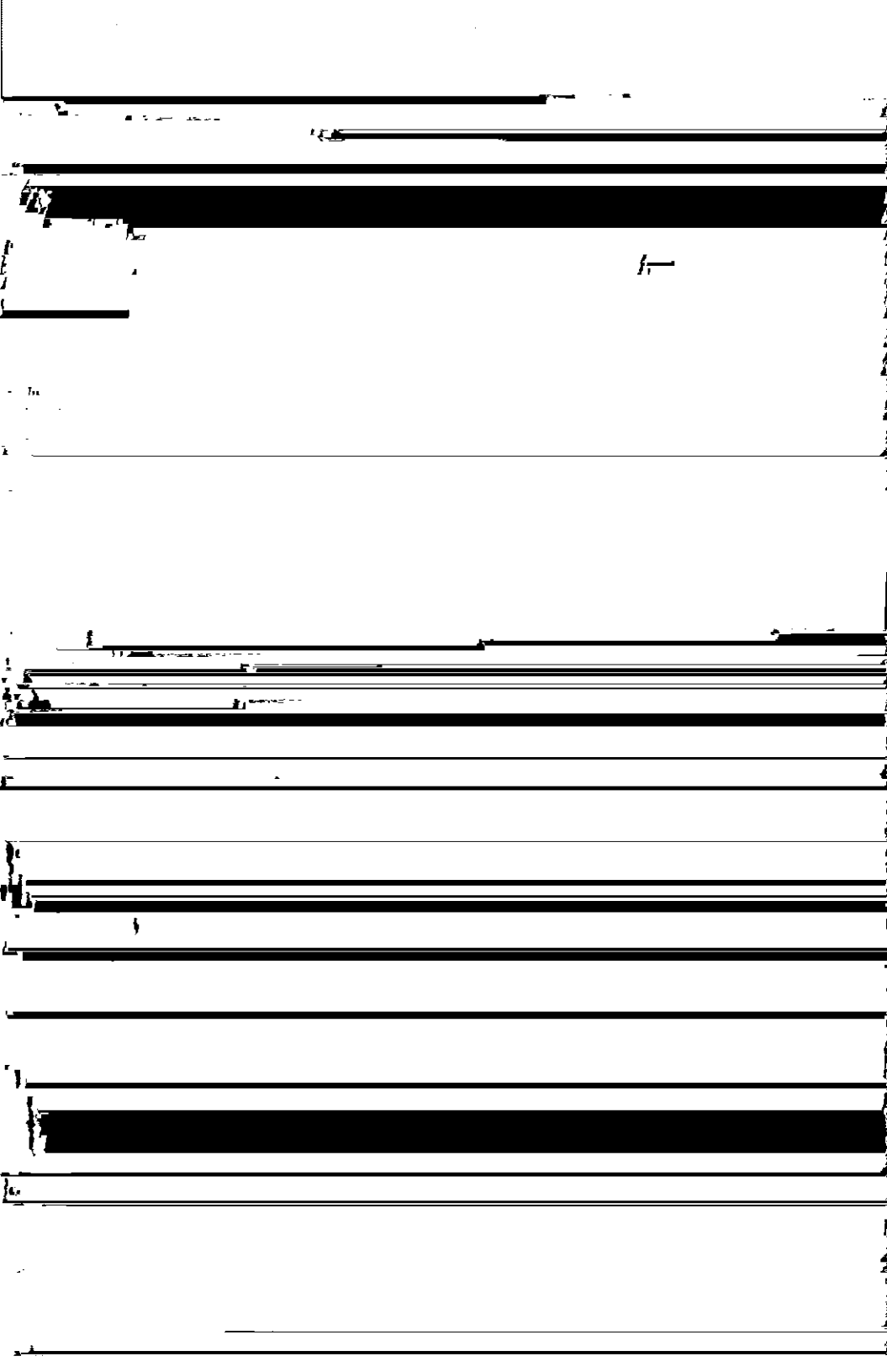
Quebec nationalism would be inconceivable without ethnic difference, or the

Figure 1









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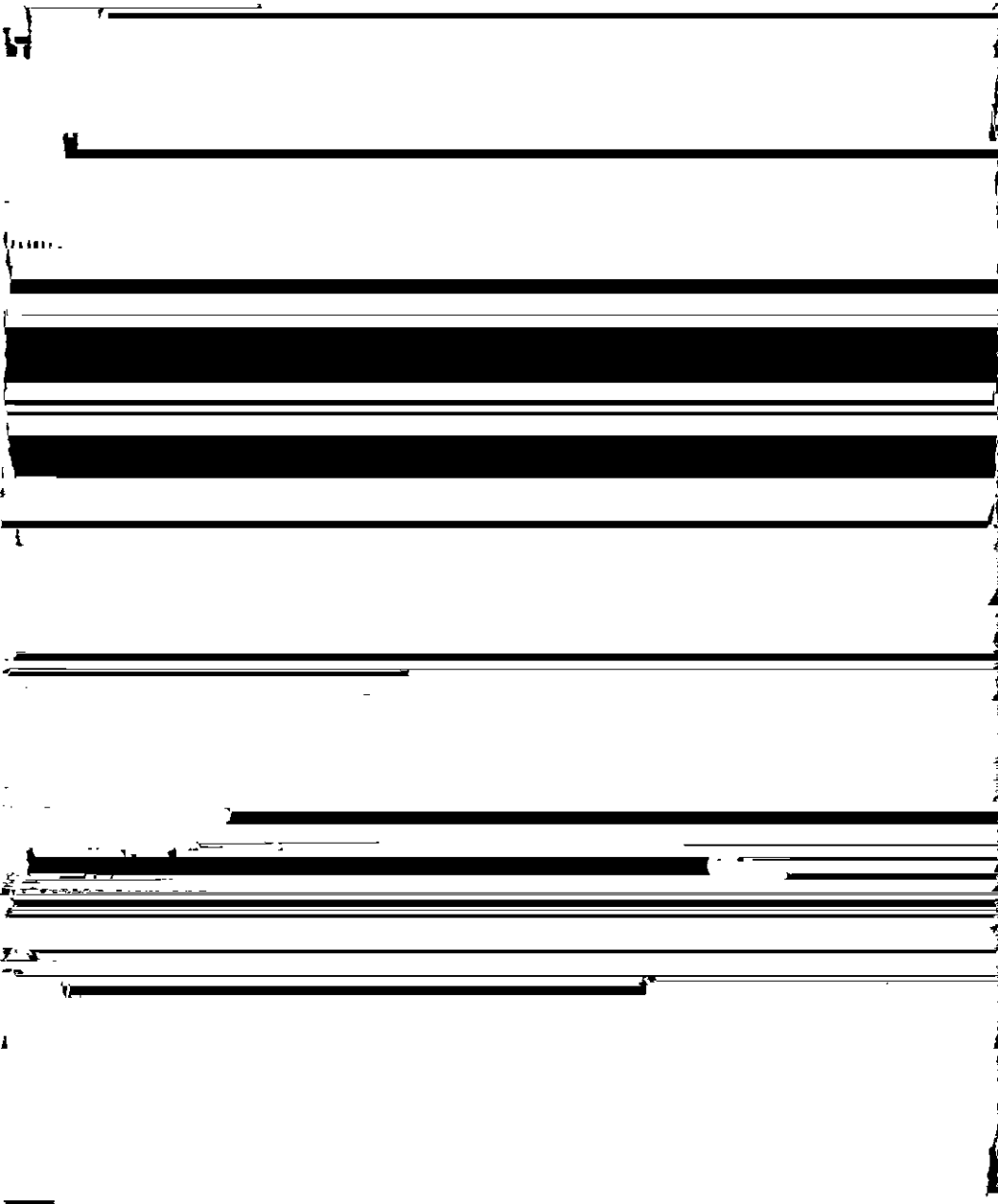
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association status without first getting the endorsement of the Quebec electorate by referendum.

The 1977 language law, "Bill 101," was similar in overall thrust to Bill 22, but went further. The minister who introduced it declared: "There will no longer be any question of a bilingual Quebec," a statement reflecting the belief that to

minority in Quebec and the francophone minority in the other provinces is



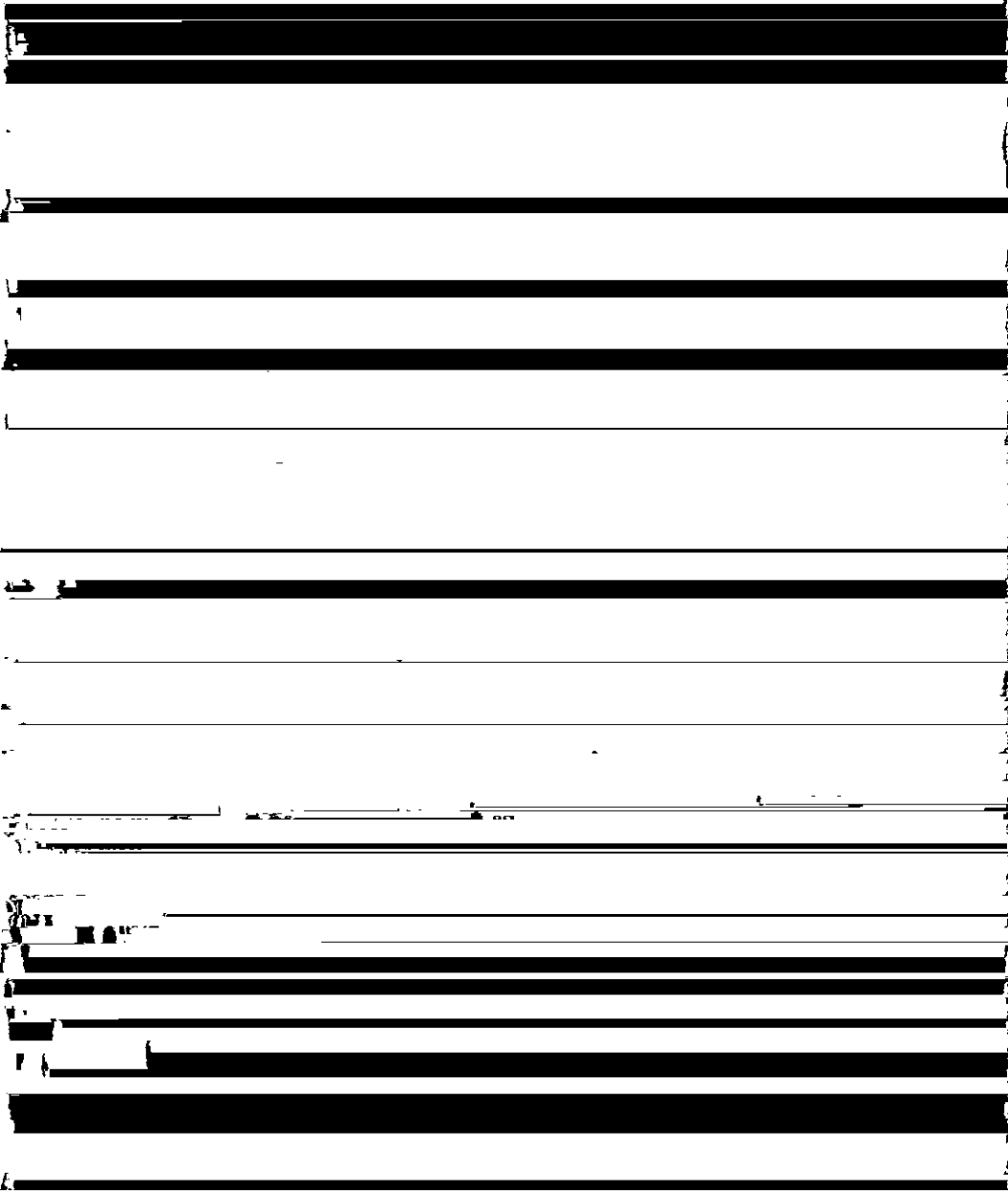
basis of a resolution to be passed by the Canadian Parliament. This initiative was supported only by the provinces of Ontario and New Brunswick, and was vehemently opposed by the federal Conservative Party. The Opposition's tactics eventually succeeded in forcing a halt to the progress of the resolution in Parliament, pending a decision by the Supreme Court of Canada on the constitutionality of the Government's move. When the Court ruled (September 1981) that Trudeau's manner of proceeding was constitutional in the legal sense, but unconstitutional in the conventional sense, its decision forced the reopening of talks with the provinces. It was on this occasion, culminating 5 November 1981, that an intergovernmental "consensus"—*actually, excluding*

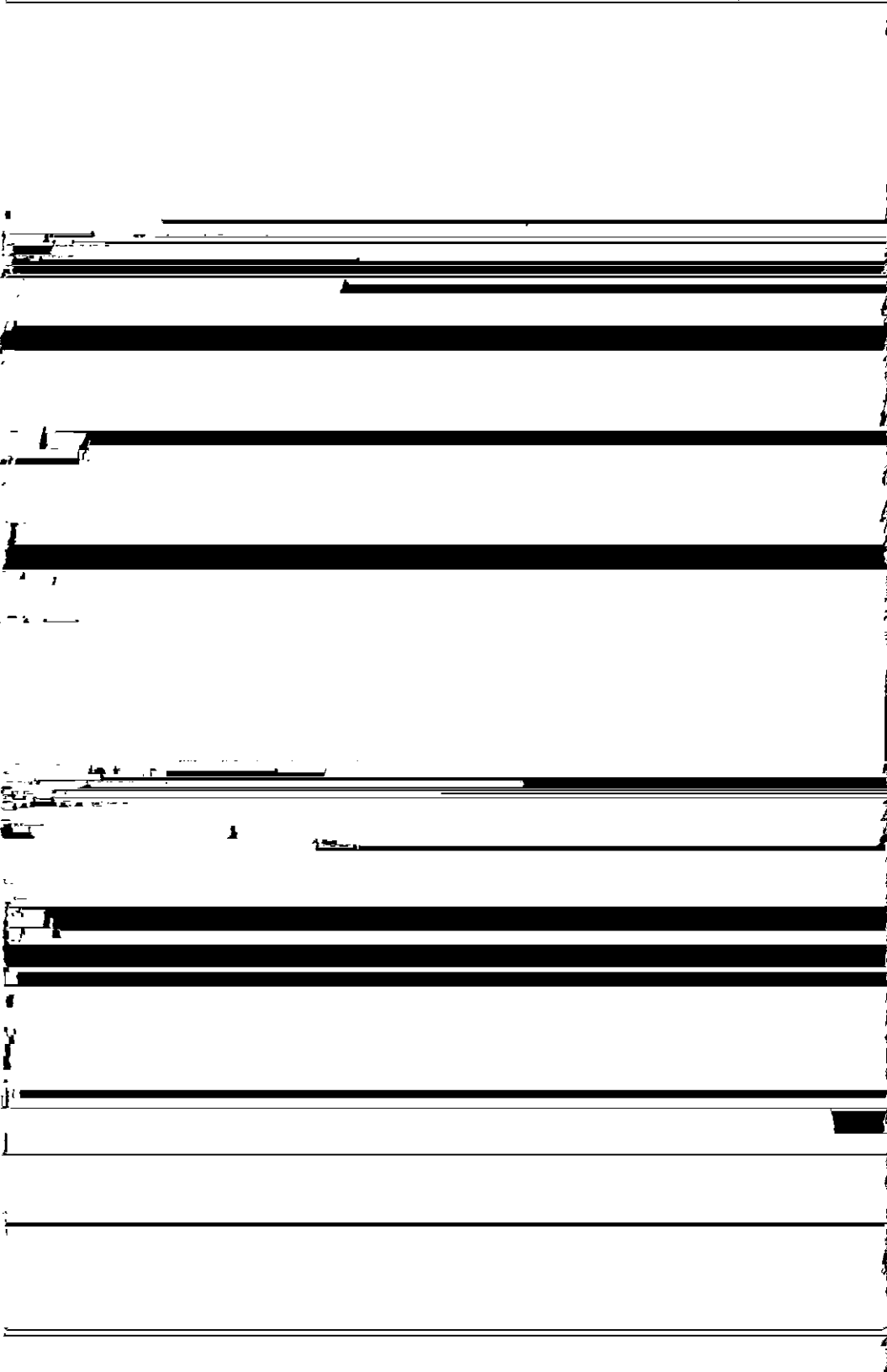
restrictions on this right: first, it applies only where numbers warrant (the definition of which the courts will eventually have to rule upon), and second, the stated rights will not come into effect in Ouebec until the legislature so

resolution of the legislature, declared that the amendment should not apply; and furthermore, if any amendment transferred policy responsibilities to the federal government, since provinces opted out of the amendment, the province

text was not agreed to until June 3, in Ottawa. The Accord will not become con-

...to support each other politically, become increasingly evident as the cam-





... that the state is not a mere instrument of the people, even if it were itself will-

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