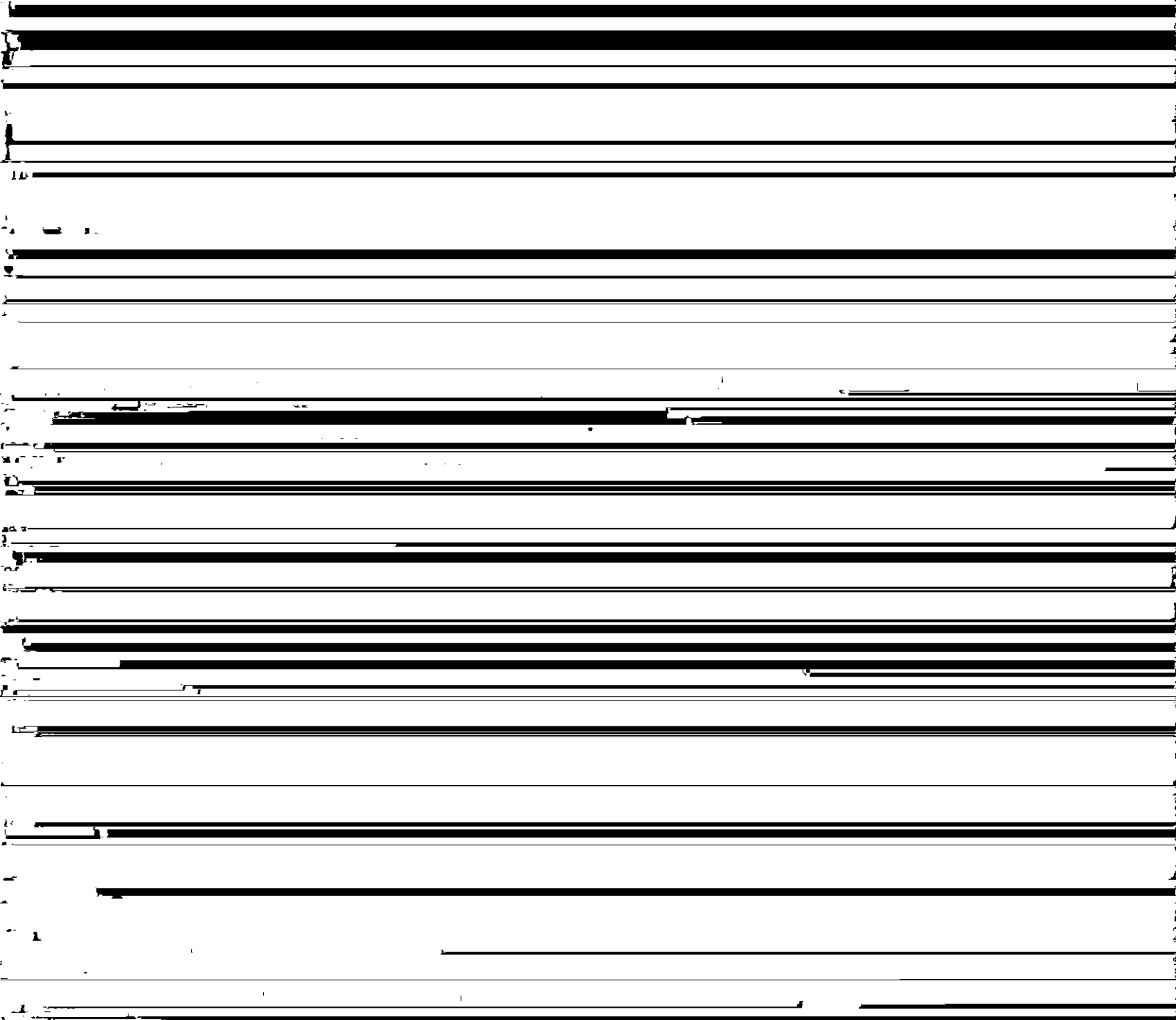


PREFACE:

The election of a government committed to the goal of political sovereignty for Quebec has raised in a most acute fashion the question of the future of Canada, and more specifically that of the future of Quebec within Confederation. Confronted with the prospect of independence, those who support Canadian unity have been required to come to terms with recent developments in Quebec. Although by now the shock of the P.Q. victory has somewhat subsided, the formulation of an adequate federalist response has been a slow and confusing process. Since November 15, 1976, there have been a myriad of conferences, seminars, debates and speeches in which federalists have

response to date. Although this analysis was primarily based upon the discussions held at the conference, it does not rely exclusively upon that discussion, and new elements were introduced. All sought to provide a critical evaluation of the issues confronting federalists and the way in which federalists tended to react to those issues.

... continued in next report the discus-



option and makes the retention of a Canada united from sea to sea, in some form or other, a necessary objective of any political and constitutional change.

(b) the recognition that to avoid the dismemberment of Canada it will be necessary to secure some measure of political accommodation with Quebec. After decades of mounting

Some federalists would argue that the

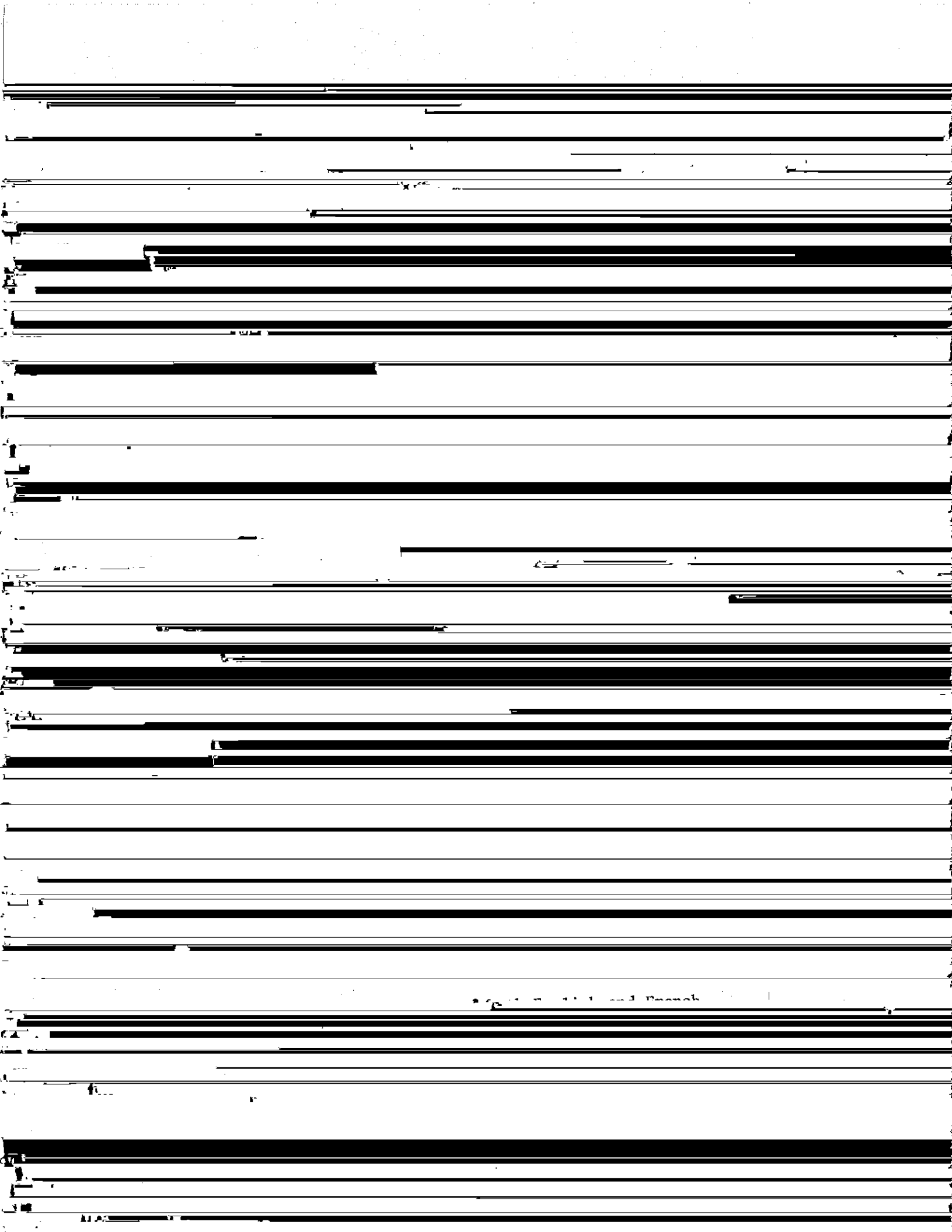
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insufficient to deal with the pro-independence position.

benefit to the various regions of Canada. Western Canada
in particular would oppose such an association and would
object to a common monetary union and a common body setting
tariff policies with Quebec if that province were to leave

Whether or not English Canada would agree to negotiate an economic union becomes almost a moot point from the federalist perspective, for if the truth of this claim ever had to be tested, federalists would already

value at all it must have a positive effect on the



Trying to influence the referendum by putting forward positive proposals for a revamped federalism.

Certain participants at the conference, particularly Francophone federalists from Quebec, emphasized the need to develop a positive federal referendum strategy. The Parti Québécois is proposing a distinctive 'projet d'avenir' and

the question of time. The referendum will be held in less than two years and it is doubtful whether effective federalist counter-proposals can be elaborated in such a short time-frame. Perhaps the most that can be communicated to the Quebec electorate is that English Canada is

to the constitution but that

leadership question, but would also serve as a test of alternative federalist counter-proposals as put forward by different national political parties.

able to what degree federalists should emphasize the notion

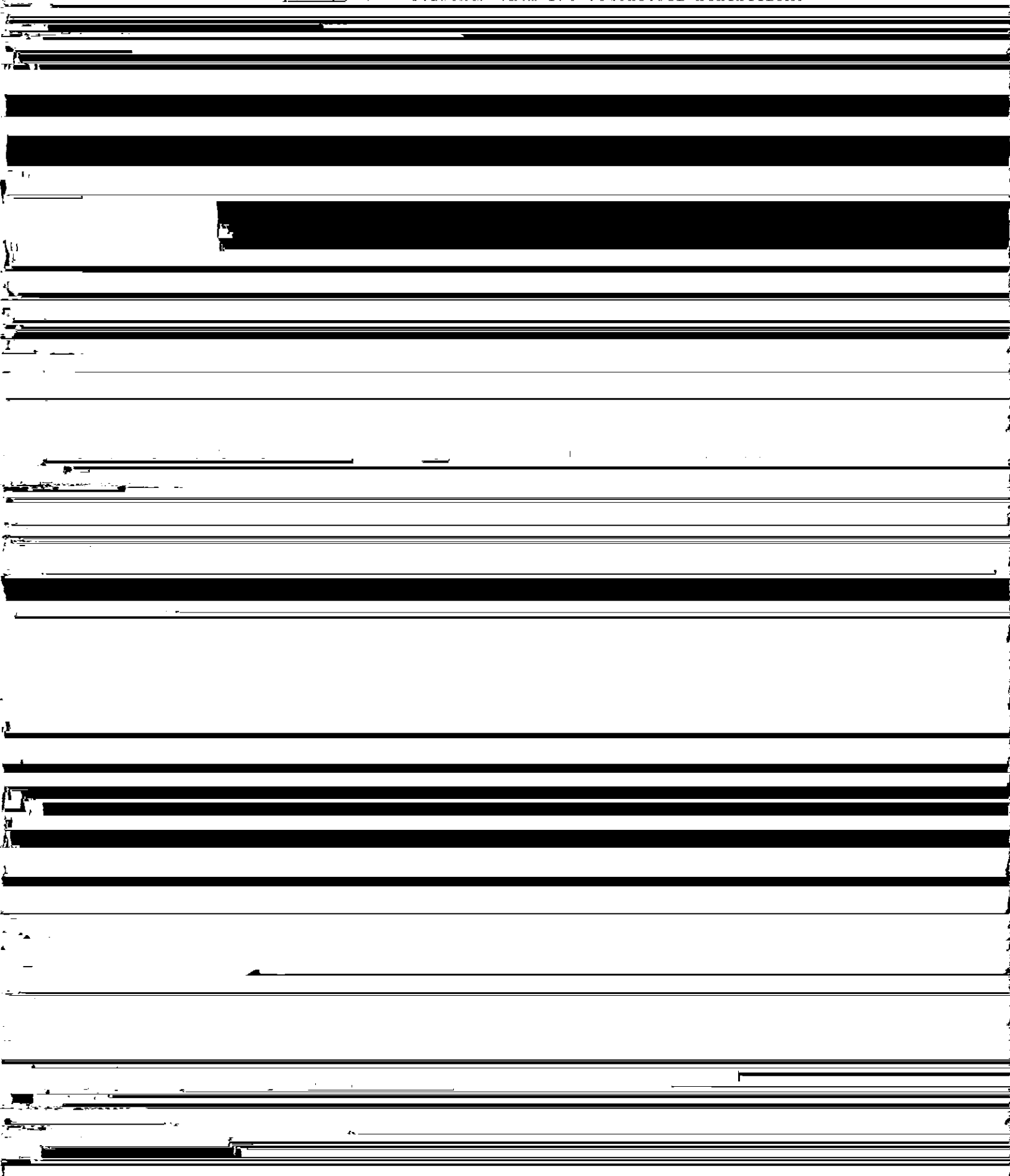
This lack of agreement on the most serious issue facing Canada has a number of sources. First, just as the major issue uniting the PQ is commitment to independence, the major issue uniting federalists is their common opposition to independence. This united front quickly breaks down in both instances once the political question shifts to other domains. Federalists may thus agree on what they are against, but this is no guarantee that they will arrive at a consensus on what they are for in terms of the future of Canada.

Second, the nature and scope of changes to the existing political structures recommended by any individual federalist will be, to a large degree, a function of how he perceives the 'problem'. Since there is no agreement as to the nature of the problem there exists little common ground upon which to search for definitive solutions. If one con-

government of Quebec, and in the structural and institutional relationships of the Quebec government with the rest of Canada. Hence the emphasis placed upon revamping in some way the constitutional and political structures of Canadian federalism.

This hampers the search for solutions, first, because such a conception of the meaning of independence fails to consider what independence means for the independence movement in Quebec. Political independence is rarely conceived of in the terms the independentists use - the legitimate aspirations of any mature people to self-determination. Even when this is noted, the necessary conclusion that to the independence movement independence itself is a goal and not a means to an end is avoided. Some federalists persist in assuming that the popularity of the independence option is a function of some "frustration" with existing political and juridical structures, and more specifically the frustration of Québécois "aspirations"

in Canada is transformed into the much broader question



the independence movement.

One variant of this perspective traces the problems French Canadians have had in maintaining their language to a form of individual discrimination against French-speaking Canadians. In the past, the interests of the Church and French Canada's traditional elites, together with the chauvinism of Anglophone Canadians combined to maintain the French language in an inferior position relative to English in Canada. The new elites in Quebec will no longer tolerate this inferiority, and the time has come to place French on an equal standing with English so that French Canadians will no longer be discriminated against socially or economically if they wish to speak their language. All discriminatory practices must end, and French linguistic rights must be promoted. This view tends to support some form of bilingualism across the country, including Quebec.

Another variant suggests that it is insufficient simply to ensure that Canadians can use the official language of their

hand, much could be accomplished through federal-provincial cooperation. Constitutional guarantees and the entrenchment of the Official Languages Act in the constitution should, however, be considered.

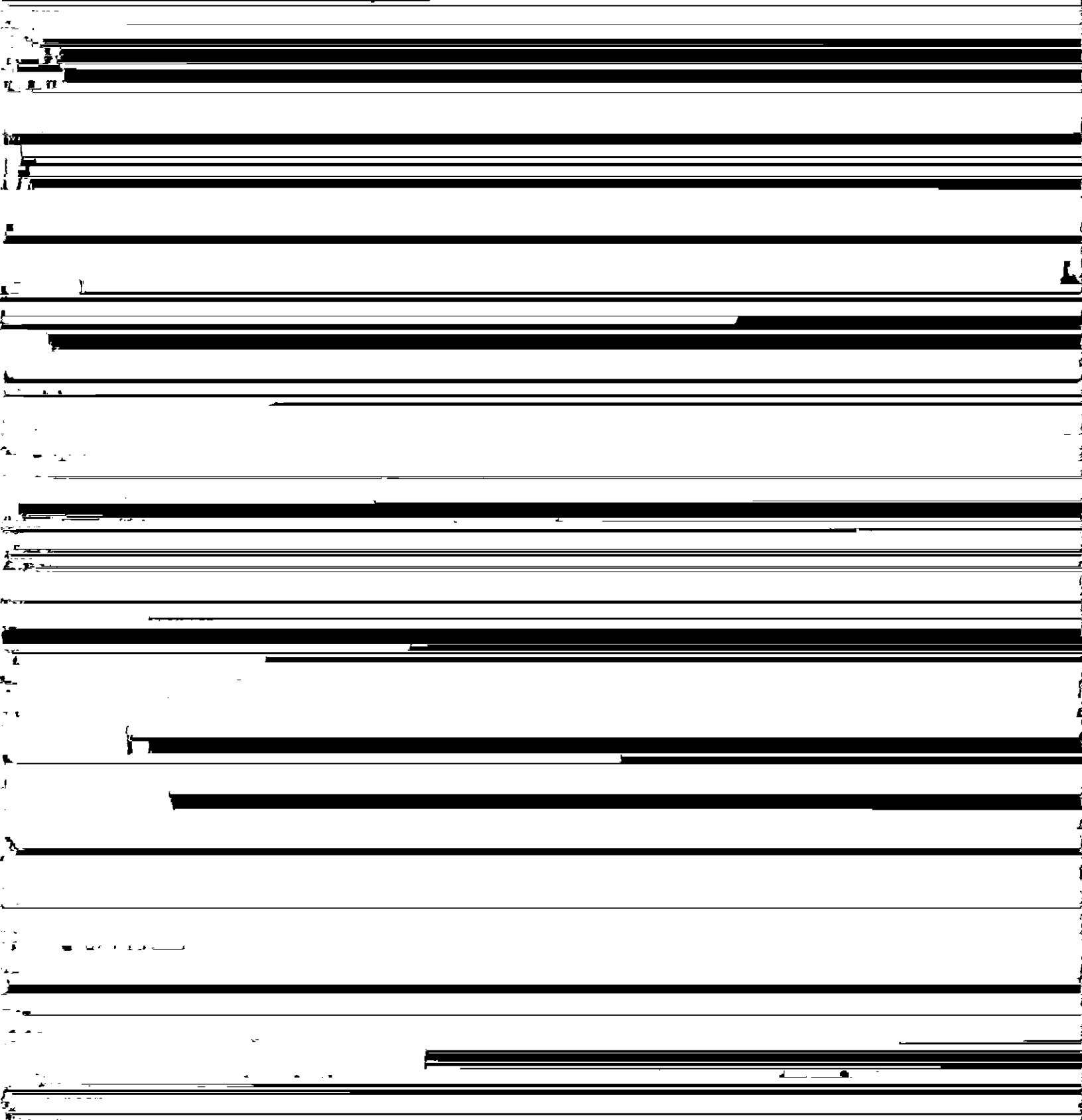
(2) The problem as a majority/minority problem

In this perspective, French Canadian 'nationalism', whose most extreme form is the independence movement, has always been fed not only by the sense but also by the reality of minority status of French Canadians within Canada. There

Canadians. The national demands of French Canada have generally been years ahead of those of Canadians in general and this has

Canada. The differences in the national aspirations of the two

a completely different conception of nationalism which made



greater equality of opportunity for French speaking Québécois

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respond to the phenomenon of Canadian regionalism and not exclusively to Quebec. Although some form of major decentralization of powers becomes an obvious solution in this

b) Should the solution take an incrementalist or comprehensive approach to the restructuring of Canadian federalism?

Federalists are also confronted with the question of the extent to which federalism must be substantively altered. In responding to this question, they may take one of two approaches: either they seek to determine what is 'wrong' with the present structures and change these incrementally, or, they seek to determine what would be the basis of a federal union if Confederation were to be remade in this day and age, and alter structures on this comprehensive evaluation. In the

Generally speaking, it suggests that constitutional guarantees and certain national policies should be enacted to protect language and cultural rights. As for provincial governments, they are considered to have sufficient jurisdiction under the B.N.A. Act, and few additional powers, other than perhaps in the fields of communications and immigration, would be transferred to them. It would be important nonetheless to clarify the constitution so that provincial jurisdiction be protected from federal encroachment. The federal government should also allow provinces a greater voice, through consultation, in the setting of federal policies affecting their interests. A strong central government is, however, needed to protect the national interests and fundamental rights, such as language rights, and the possibility exists of actually enhancing federal powers in this latter area.

greater use of concurrent process, particularly if principal

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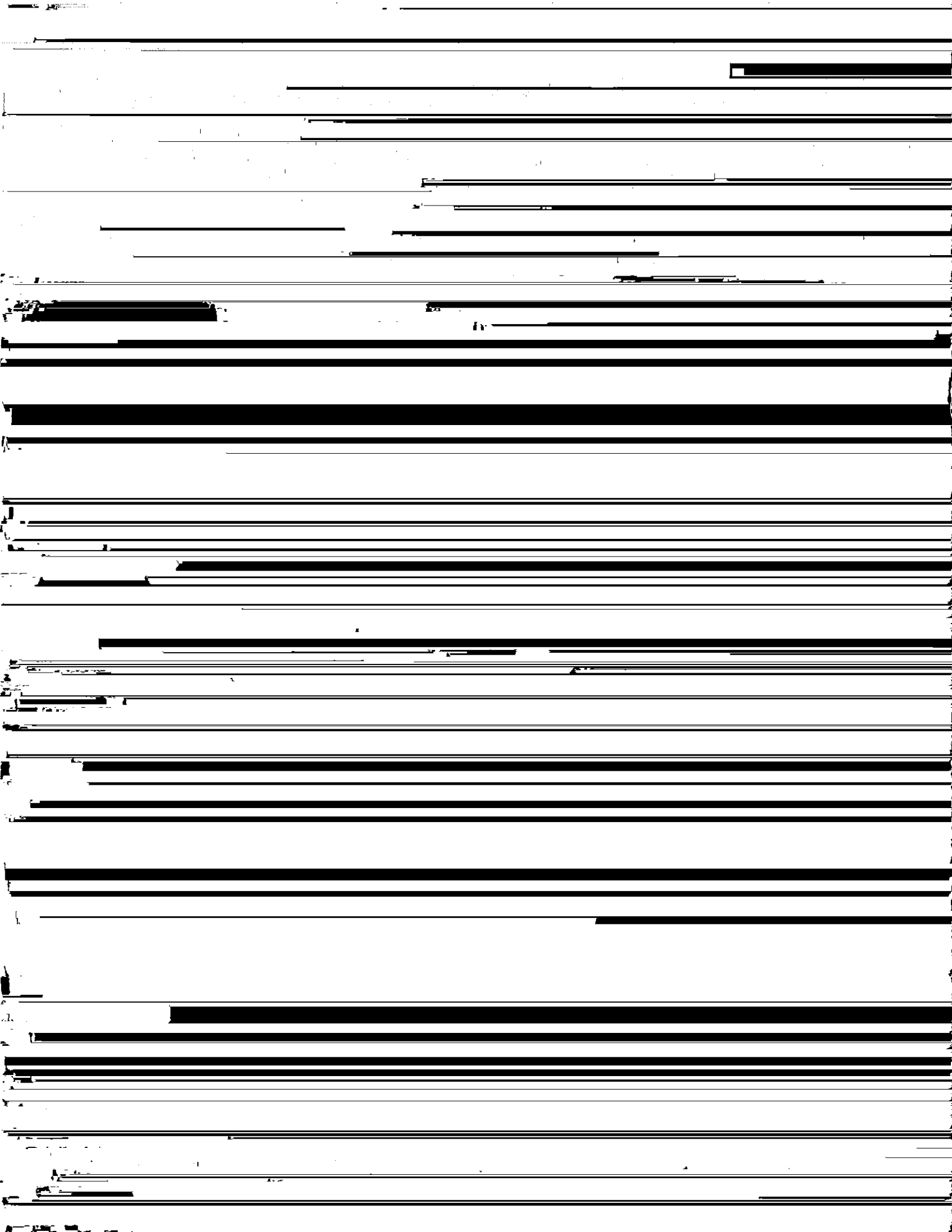
and perhaps to the other provinces. Others argue, on the other hand, that federal powers over the economy are essential to the economic stability and future prosperity of the entire country and any attempt at further decentralization would produce a balkanization which could only have negative effects on Canada's growing economic problems. English-speaking provinces, and

than decentralize, a greater degree of centralization would be more in keeping with the desires of Anglophone Canadians.

It is also clear that greater powers be

B. Changes to the Structures of Central Government Institutions

It is important to consider changes in the structure of central government institutions for two reasons. First, it



decentralization of powers to Quebec. If Quebec could trust
the central government to act in and to protect its interests

.33.

C. Reaching a Solution

Though united in their belief that federalism should

In a federal system authority is divided and

that it will agree to constitutional discussions until after the referendum. For one thing its mandate is subject to challenge, and in view of the fact that federalists were quick to point out that the election had not provided it with a mandate to start negotiating with English Canada, one can appreciate why the PQ would prefer to clarify its mandate via the referendum before entering upon formal constitutional discussions. Much will depend upon the wording and outcome of the referendum but it will be instrumental

ing of confrontation politics between Quebec and Ottawa
becomes a distinct possibility, particularly as the
Federalists are therefore con-

of the political system are critical. Obviously, if the Quebec electorate opts for political independence, the prospects of maintaining a united Canada become extremely remote. This explains the concern federalists have with

... that the Cuban government would require only

governments and is contingent upon whether Quebec agrees to participate. Although there are numerous problems with getting such a mechanism going, unless federalists

~~will do it, it is unlikely that any federalist~~

Quebec, the Parti Québécois is facing the perils, as well as the advantages of governing, and appears increasingly pessimistic about its chances of decisively winning the referendum. Claude Ryan, former editor of Le Devoir has assumed the provincial Liberal leadership, thus offering a

of the federal government, in the form of a White Paper, a lengthy draft Bill and a set of explanatory documents. While the Quebec Liberals have not issued a complete set of proposals, Mr. Ryan's views became well-known in the course of his leadership campaign,

Moreover, the federal government now sought to set a tough time schedule for consideration of changes. It proposed to divide constitutional reform into two broad

interests and would require provincial cooperation if they were to be fully implemented. Similarly many provincial leaders would prefer to discuss the division of powers

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Rather they focus primarily on rights - linguistic, political and civil - on political institutions, and, especially in the Liberal case, on the need for unifying symbols. Canada's difficulties, it implies, are rooted

hailed as the new vision of Confederation. Varied and often contradictory criticisms have been made of each of them.

Moreover, there remains disagreement about pro-

... .. in opposition both to the