

# The Meech swamp

NOEL B HERSHFIELD, MD, FRCPC, FACP

SHORTLY AFTER THE MEECH LAKE ACCORD DIED (IT IS NOW known as the Meech Lake Discord) I noticed an advertisement in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* for an 'Associate Director of Maintenance of Competence'. At the end of the advertisement, it was stated "bilingualism is an asset". I wondered what two languages were required? English and Ojibwa? Ukrainian, Gaelic – certainly not French! Obviously I wondered about this as the question must now arise regarding what happens to our valuable French Canadian colleagues if all of the dire predictions from various 'informed' sources are fulfilled.

Will they form their own colleges? The Quebec College of Physicians and Surgeons or the Independent Distinct Societies Association of Gastroenterology? Indeed, the possibilities are endless. Our organization may then be called the Balkan Association of Gastroenterology or worse still (here in the Western Division) perhaps the Upper Montanington Association of Gastroenterology.

Obviously no one – not even those pundits whose learned

visions of doom with which we have been inundated in the past six months – know what is really going to happen. It is, at least to the political neophyte, a depressing thought that this great nation could undergo an India-Pakistan type of split. Not only would we lose our fine colleagues in Quebec, plus their tremendous input into our Association and in advances in gastroenterology, but we would lose their 'joie de vivre', their 'savoir faire' and of course, their 'distinct' association with us, the English-speaking gastroenterologists. (Call me a sentimentalist, call me a babe in the political plus economic woods, but this writer decries what is happening.) One wonders where the visionary is that can mend our wounds? The 'man on the white horse', who will drag this beautiful land out of the morass in which it finds itself?

Should we not, as doctors, speak out – to the country and to each other? Cannot we combine our collective talents (which are not insignificant) and try to find a solution that the politicians do not seem able to come up with? When was the last time you wrote to one of your French (English) colleagues and sent support, hope and even suggestions?

This is too great a country to be torn apart by real or imagined economic, religious or ethnic disputes. We as physicians should work together to make the whole country a 'distinct society'.

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*Clinical Professor, Department of Medicine, University of Calgary,  
711 South Tower, 3031 Hospital Drive NW, Calgary, Alberta T2N  
2T9*

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