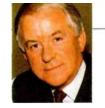
### FROM: THE EDITOR'S DESK



# The Tools For The Job

hat lingers is the untrammelled emotion of the 12 Canadians who took part in a unique Maclean's experiment from June 7 to 10. The magazine had formed the group by choosing its members from socalled thought clusters that Decima Research, Maclean's regular polling firm, had singled out as representing the dominant lines of thinking in the nation. They ranged from committed Quebec separatists to ardent centralists. They met at a secluded Ontario resort, the Briars on Lake Simcoe, with Harvard law professor Roger Fisher, a pioneer in conflict resolution theory, and two of his colleagues, Stuart Diamond and Robert Ricigliano, from the Cambridge, Mass.-based Conflict Management Group. Not only are they the best in their field, but the participants welcomed them as non-Canadians who brought a dispassionate attitude to the task given to the 12 Canadians: to see if there is still enough will and ability among representative Canadians to create a framework for a new and acceptable country. At the end of the process, they did just that-not by drafting a formal constitution or a legal document of any kind, but by developing a vision with which they all agreed, a statement of national principles and some details of a renewed federation, a package that all 12 participants enthusiastically signed. The document even contains a specific action plan for implementing the reforms that they recommended.

But one of the most striking elements of the remarkable weekend was the sheer strength of the emotional attachment

that the participants showed for Canada—either Canada as it is, or a Canada that could be. And as that kind of Canadian-ness emerged, it did so untinged by the traditional undercurrent of anti-Americanism. In fact, when Ricigliano, a young, no-nonsense Harvard law graduate, had to leave early, his attempt to depart quietly was interrupted by a woman from Quebec who had gone to the Briars as a committed separatist. She embraced him and wept openly. Then, the others followed her, some of them weeping too. Finally, Ricigliano himself began to cry and Fisher, standing in the background, began to dab at tears.

In the end, Diamond said, it seemed clear that the techniques used at the Briars could be apphed on the national level to resolve some of Canada's most intractable constitutional problems. Added Diamond: "The real lesson is that a dozen people, selected for their differences and representative of various Canadian viewpoints, could, over a weekend, deal effectively with their differences and come to agreements, using a systematic process of analysis and discussion."

That observation gains significance because some prominent Canadians are now quietly discussing the establishment of a radically different constituent assembly, elected provincially and made up of about 70 citizens who are not politically active, to draw up a new constitution that would then be voted on in provincial referendums and, if approved by all of them, would be adopted by all legislatures in the country to become law. Fisher's conflict resolution methods would be a priceless tool in such a process.

#### Macleans

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# THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT

# Macleans

CANADA'S WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE JULY 1, 1991 VOL. 104 NO. 25

#### **CONTENTS**

#### **3 EDITORIAL**

- 6 LETTERS/PASSAGES
- 80 WORLD

India gets a frail, 70-year-old prime minister, Congress (I) party leader P. V. Narasimha Rao; the former capital of Berlin wins out over Bonn; South Africa ends another vestige of apartheid.

#### 84 BUSINESS

A dispute over Canadian content in Japanese cars may spark a battle over free trade and the Auto Pact.

#### 86 BUSINESS WATCH/ PETER C. NEWMAN

#### 88 FASHION

Clothes that change color are proving to be hot items.

#### 90 HEALTH

AIDS vaccine research represents a new direction for scientists.

94 PEOPLE

#### 95 MUSIC

Kashtin proves that neither English nor French is a prerequisite for success.

#### **98 BOOKS**

A new biography claims that political naivete killed Gerald Bull.

#### **100 FOTHERINGHAM**

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#### SPECIAL REPORT





The 15 participants, left to right: Stuart Diamond, John Prall, Viola Cerezke-Schooler, Charles Dupuis, Marie LeBeau, Roger Fisher, Sheila Simpson, Karen Adams, Carol Geddes, Cyril Alleyne, Karren Collings, Richard Miller, Colin Finn, Robert Lalande and Robert Ricigliano.

# THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT 10-

Twelve Canadians scientifically chosen for their differences met with conflict resolution experts for a weekend—and produced a remarkable vision for Canada.

# THE 12 WHO SHARED 12

It was a weekend of discovery—and selfdiscovery—for the dozen individuals from across the country who participated in the *Maclean's* forum on national unity.

# A CANADIAN RENEWAL -26-

The forum concluded that national change must extend beyond the dry wording of the Constitution to include economic revival and better communication among Canadians.

#### A WEEKEND OF CANDOR 34

In their main meeting room, at outdoor gatherings and over meals, the 12 participants engaged in searching, and frequently touching, dialogue in pursuit of their mutually held vision of a nation.

## TO CLARIFY A VISION 52

In their final text, forum members spelled out their suggestions for creating a renewed country "in which all Canadians would feel fully accepted, at home and fairly treated."

# THE GETTING-TO-YES BUSINESS 58

A three-man team led by world-renowned Harvard law professor Roger Fisher showed forum members how to set aside their preconceptions about one another and recognize their common interests.

# THE VOICES OF A NATION 62

Toronto-based Decima Research identified the "clusters" of thought that represent the main thinking patterns of the nation, and helped *Maclean*'s find the individuals who fall under the umbrellas of those specific beliefs.

# THE THREE REFEREES 66

The three conflict resolution experts who guided the *Maclean's* forum brought a wealth of experience to the task.

#### THE EXPERTS' REPORT

#### -68-

Looking back on their weekend session with 12 Canadians, the American negotiators concluded that the country could learn a lot from the participants' experience.

# THE ROOTS OF CONFLICT 70

The British North America Act created a state, but in its ambiguity it also set off a constitutional power struggle that haunts Canada 124 years later.