
PREFACE

Preface and Acknowledgements

When I undertook to act as Commissioner of this Inquiry, I was conscious of my limitations, one of which was my lack of qualifications and specialized knowledge in the fields of Canadian political institutions, government, and public administration. As the public hearings progressed, I underwent an intensive educational experience in these areas, as witnesses testified about the structure of the federal government in Canada, and the rules, written and unwritten, that govern it. Nonetheless, I was aware that I needed much more expertise than what was being communicated to me in the hearings.

In civil or criminal cases, when a Judge is called upon to make a ruling on a matter requiring specialized knowledge, the Judge will expect that the parties involved in the litigation will call to testify expert witnesses able to advise the Court on the technical aspects of the case, and to express informed opinions. Invariably, the experts also produce detailed reports explaining the background of their conclusions. In this way, the Judge

becomes sufficiently educated in an area until then unknown to him or her, and is able to come to a rational conclusion.

It was on the basis of my experience as a trial judge that I realized that it would be necessary to recruit a team of experts possessing the experience and expertise that I lacked, which could assist and advise the Commission in the preparation of the present Report and the formulation of the recommendations that it contains.

The theme that resonated in my mind throughout our hearings and as I began to assess the evidence before me was the necessary link between responsibility and accountability. Last November, I presented my conclusions, based on the evidence, on who was responsible for many of the actions that led to this Inquiry. In this final Report, I offer my views on who should be held accountable for administering our system of government and how to make that system stronger and more transparent. The recommendations in this Report seek to restore accountability to our federal system of government.

The Report itself, in the first Chapter, describes in a general way the many sources that were consulted, and in several Appendices the reader will find the names and the qualifications of the persons who provided the Commission with the fruit of their knowledge, experience and wisdom. These are persons who deserve to be called great Canadians, and the Commission is deeply indebted to them all. On behalf of the Commission and on behalf of all Canadians, we thank them sincerely for their time and efforts.

Special thanks are due to Mr. Raymond Garneau, who accepted to act as the Chair of the Advisory Committee, and the members of his Committee, which conducted consultations of distinguished experts in public life in five Canadian cities. The Advisory Committee, on the basis of the consultations conducted across Canada and on the basis of

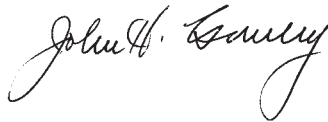
the accumulated experience of its own members, provided the Commission with invaluable insight and counsel. Mr. Garneau took time from a very busy schedule to devote himself whole-heartedly to the task of guiding the work of the Advisory Committee, which he directed with skill and tact.

The Advisory Committee was put together at my request by Dr. Donald Savoie, a professor at the University of Moncton, an acknowledged authority on Canadian governmental institutions and practices, and the author of many books and articles on these subjects. I owe him particular thanks for all his efforts in directing the research program, a task that he discharged with remarkable energy and good humour. Dr. Savoie commissioned on our behalf the 17 research studies that form part of this Report, and that have contributed greatly to the Commission's understanding of the complex issues dealt with in the Report. He also assisted in the drafting of the Report. It is only fair to say that the Commission would not have been able to accomplish its mandate and objectives without his participation.

Many others, employees of the Commission and persons engaged by contract to render services to it, worked diligently and under intense pressure to produce the Report on time. I cannot begin to thank each one of them by name for fear of overlooking one or two, but assure them of my gratitude for their expert assistance.

Finally, I would like to thank all those Canadian citizens who wrote or e-mailed the Commission to comment on its work or to offer advice and suggestions. The Commission tried to acknowledge receipt of each communication received, and apologizes if in a few cases it failed to do so. Be assured that all comments received have been taken into consideration. Throughout the hearings and the period of public consultations, the Commission has been aware of the lively interest of the public in the questions being investigated.

The views of Canadian citizens on how to avoid errors of administration and on how certain reforms might accomplish this, are important and useful, now and in the future. Those views, along with the analysis of my expert advisors, have helped to shape the recommendations. I believe that these recommendations can help to clarify and fortify the respective accountabilities of public servants and elected officials and how they interact.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John H. Gougeon". The signature is written in black ink and is centered on the page.