PREFACE

This book represents a by-product of a larger study of linguistic pluralism in several societies that has been in progress for several years. If the present study has any precise inspiration it originates not so much from anything read in the literature as from living temporarily in Belgium and Switzerland during 1969-70 and becoming modestly acquainted with the political process of those two countries at first hand. For a Canadian it was a novel experience to observe political systems that emphasize the *continuous* adjustment of sharply diversified and clearly articulated interests. If the results of this adjustment seem somewhat nebulous and inconclusive from a distance, what stands out on closer acquaintance is the relatively high level of responsiveness of the process itself. One soon senses that in these countries, as compared to the more familiar Anglo-American model, the major parties and interest groups are continuously and formally involved in policy discussion and decision-making.

The experience of living in Belgium and Switzerland reinforced for me two personal convictions that had been growing since the early 1960's. The first is that the political traditions of Western democracies are highly diversified and the significance of any particular country's political system is not a function of its size or population. Those who set out in the 1970's to reflect upon or borrow from the political traditions of the West may well find that the experience of some of the smaller and lesser known democracies is most worthy of attention and most relevant to their situation. The second conviction is that Canadians, whatever their other advantages and providential blessings, do not possess, as they often assume, the best political system in the world. There is evidence that unquestioning acceptance of Anglo-American norms in the Canadian political system has not served Canada well, and that closer study might suggest modifications that would make that system more responsive to Canada's diversified social structure. Many Canadians have envisioned a political system that would fashion a more integrated Canadian society; the real problem is to find one that will reflect and support its continuing diversity.

In the 1960's that problem became more urgent. Many Canadians, French-speaking and English-speaking alike, concluded that the Canadian federation was doomed and that French and English Canadians would go their separate ways through the political independence of Quebec. I do not accept the need for such a

solution. I do accept that it is imperative to explore, with urgency, imagination, and willingness to innovate, just how that federation may be continued and adapted so as to accommodate and reconcile forces that are threatening to tear it apart.

The readings in this volume have been chosen with several modest but distinct objectives in view: to indicate how the successful accommodation of serious political cleavages in certain countries has given rise to the concept of consociational democracy in the recent literature of political science; to identify and analyze the main approaches to the consociational theme in its broader sense; to illustrate more fully the European settings in which consociational political systems have arisen; to consider how far the consociational model may be useful in understanding the Canadian political system; and to raise for further discussion the question of using the consociational model normatively or prescriptively, in Canada and elsewhere, as a criterion for evaluating the past performance of political systems and shaping their future development. This book has no precise solutions for the present crisis in Canadian federalism. It offers, at the most, a first small guidepost for a journey that may prove long and arduous, a journey whose end lies far out of sight.

In preparing this volume I have had encouragement and assistance from many sources, and I should like to express my thanks in some small measure here: to the Canada Council for a Leave Fellowship in 1969-70 and to Carleton University for the sabbatical leave that gave me a first-hand glimpse of consociational politics; to the organizers of the 1972 Quebec Round Table on Multilingual Political Systems, jointly sponsored by the International Political Science Association and the International Centre for Research on Bilingualism, for the opportunity to explore the theme in detail; and to the Board of Directors of the International Centre for Research on Bilingualism at Laval University for allowing republication in this collection of my own two papers, which are to appear in the Round Table proceedings in slightly different form. The original drafts of these two papers have been much improved as a result of comments and friendly criticism by Val Lorwin, John Meisel, Jean Laponce, William Mackey, and Albert Verdoodt. I have also benefited from discussions about consociationalism with two of our doctoral candidates at Carleton, Ilja Scholten and Jim McAllister. In the many and diverse tasks of preparing the volume as a whole I have had generous assistance from my wife and from my secretary, Mrs. Maureen Sayers.

A final note of thanks must go to the authors and original publishers of the other contributions to the volume for their prompt cooperation in meeting a tight publication deadline, and

particularly to Gerhard Lehmbruch and Val Lorwin for allowing papers already well known and widely cited to be printed for the first time in this collection.

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