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Across the great divide [Reformers of Upper and Lower Canada forged a pact in 1841]

Saul, John R. *Queen's Quarterly* 104.1 (Spring 1997): 8-28.

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Kingston, Ontario, played a founding role in the history of Canadian democracy. It was here that a great humanist pact that sealed, one that lies at the heart of what Canada was intended to be, and can still be. This was a pact among nineteenth-century reformers -- and these individuals embraced "reform" in its real sense. The reformers of Upper and Lower Canada forged an alliance of French and English, of Catholics and Protestants -- the beginning of that wonderful fracturing of Canada which makes us such an interesting and complex place. The first parliament of the United Canadas sat in Kingston from 1841 to 1843. But on the first day of its sitting, 13 June 1841, Canada West's Robert Baldwin resigned his office in the Executive Council because no French Canadians had been included. Louis LaFontaine, the great reform leader from Canada East, was not even in town that day because he had been defeated by partisan mobs in the spring election. The governor, Lord Sydenham, had gone so far as to hire thugs to ensure the defeat of those advocating "responsible government." But Robert Baldwin and his father, Dr William Warren Baldwin,(f.1) quickly devised a way for LaFontaine to enter the legislature. Baldwin had been elected in both Hastings and the Fourth Riding of York. He stood down in York so that LaFontaine could run in Canada West. The French reformer was elected easily in the heart of English Canada.(f.2) The great pact to which I refer would be formally sealed a year later, on 13 September 1842. LaFontaine had arrived in Kingston, and the new governor, Sir Charles Bagot, had offered him a place in the government, but this time Baldwin would be excluded. This governor, like his predecessor, hoped to play the French and English reformers against one another. LaFontaine refused the bribe. Neither he nor Baldwin was interested simply in attaining power for himself or for his party. Each refused power because it did not come under the right conditions; as offered, it was not a power acceptable to men with ethics and morality and ideas about responsible government. The legislature was housed in the General Hospital, not very far from the Queen's University campus, with 84 members squeezed into a room only 50 feet by 20 feet. LaFontaine, having just refused an important government position, rose on the first day of the sitting and began speaking in French. This was a violation of the rules of the House, which recognized only English as the language of political discourse. But LaFontaine continued on, giving a speech that stands out even among the speeches made in nineteenth-century Canadian politics, even though that era included the oratory of men like McGee, Laurier, and Blake. There is one paragraph which is of tremendous importance. I think it is one of the key paragraphs in the history of statesmanship in this country, and it concerns public responsibility and individualism. This is how one of the two fathers of present-day Canada put it: Struggles of principle and of political beliefs have been engaged in the separate legislatures of Lower and Upper Canada. Sympathies gradually formed between the men struggling in each place for the same cause, even if they had not yet physically met. Those sympathies began to grow, to become more present the moment that these men walked into this House, this Chamber, were able to shake each others' hands. These relations created not only sympathies but far more than that. They created moral obligations to which our own sense of our honour imposes an absolute necessity for me in particular not to be found lacking. I have remained faithful to those obligations. LaFontaine had no interest in power unless it could be exercised within a system based on openness and accountability. Over the next few months, he and Baldwin would win a toe-hold for responsible government, only to be driven back by reactionary forces. Several years of struggle followed, and then, in 1848, the reformers finally formed the "Great Ministry"

under conditions that were compatible with their ideals. What was sealed in Kingston in 1842 would finally be confirmed in Montreal, in the ashes of the parliament buildings burnt down in 1849 by the neo-conservatives of the day. What was sealed in Kingston was a multi-level pact. English and French reformers came together in an atmosphere of public good superseding personal interest. They laid out a plan of government in which governing authority would be subject to ethics and ideas, in which personal responsibility would be the inseparable reflection of authority. They desired to place a conscious humanist balance in a society where reform would mean an endless road towards greater justice. And they wanted debate to be something public and transparent, consisting of words that deliver meaning instead of serving to conceal it. What else can be drawn from those events?

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Kingston, Ontario, played a founding role in the history of Canadian democracy. It was here that a great humanist pact that sealed, one that lies at the heart of what Canada was intended to be, and can still be. This was a pact among nineteenth-century reformers -- and these individuals embraced "reform" in its real sense. The reformers of Upper and Lower Canada forged an alliance of French and English, of Catholics and Protestants -- the beginning of that wonderful fracturing of Canada which makes us such an interesting and complex place. The first parliament of the United Canadas sat in Kingston from 1841 to 1843. But on the first day of its sitting, 13 June 1841, Canada West's Robert Baldwin resigned his office in the Executive Council because no French Canadians had been included. Louis LaFontaine, the great reform leader from Canada East, was not even in town that day because he had been defeated by partisan mobs in the spring election. The governor, Lord Sydenham, had gone so far as to hire thugs to ensure the defeat of those advocating "responsible government." But Robert Baldwin and his father, Dr William Warren Baldwin,(f.1) quickly devised a way for LaFontaine to enter the legislature. Baldwin had been elected in both Hastings and the Fourth Riding of York. He stood down in York so that LaFontaine could run in Canada West. The French reformer was elected easily in the heart of English Canada.(f.2) The great pact to which I refer would be formally sealed a year later, on 13 September 1842. LaFontaine had arrived in Kingston, and the new governor, Sir Charles Bagot, had offered him a place in the government, but this time Baldwin would be excluded. This governor, like his predecessor, hoped to play the French and English reformers against one another. LaFontaine refused the bribe. Neither he nor Baldwin was interested simply in attaining power for himself or for his party. Each refused power because it did not come under the right conditions; as offered, it was not a power acceptable to men with ethics and morality and ideas about responsible government. The legislature was housed in the General Hospital, not very far from the Queen's University campus, with 84 members squeezed into a room only 50 feet by 20 feet. LaFontaine, having just refused an important government position, rose on the first day of the sitting and began speaking in French. This was a violation of the rules of the House, which recognized only English as the language of political discourse. But LaFontaine continued on, giving a speech that stands out even among the speeches made in nineteenth-century Canadian politics, even though that era included the oratory of men like McGee, Laurier, and Blake. There is one paragraph which is of tremendous importance. I think it is one of the key paragraphs in the history of statesmanship in this country, and it concerns public responsibility and individualism. This is how one of the two fathers of present-day Canada put it: Struggles of principle and of political beliefs have been engaged in the separate legislatures of Lower and Upper Canada. Sympathies gradually formed between the men struggling in each place for the same cause, even if they had not yet physically met. Those sympathies began to grow, to become more present the moment that these men walked into this House, this Chamber, were able to shake each others' hands. These relations created not only sympathies but far more than that. They created moral obligations to which our own sense of our honour imposes an absolute necessity for me in particular not to be found lacking. I have remained faithful to those obligations. LaFontaine had no interest in power unless it could be exercised within a system based on openness and accountability. Over the next few months, he and Baldwin would win a toe-hold for responsible government, only to be driven back by reactionary forces. Several years of struggle followed, and then, in 1848, the reformers finally formed the "Great Ministry" under conditions that were compatible with their ideals. What was sealed in Kingston in 1842 would finally be confirmed in Montreal, in the ashes of the parliament buildings burnt down in 1849 by the neo-conservatives of the

day. What was sealed in Kingston was a multi-level pact. English and French reformers came together in an atmosphere of public good superseding personal interest. They laid out a plan of government in which governing authority would be subject to ethics and ideas, in which personal responsibility would be the inseparable reflection of authority. They desired to place a conscious humanist balance in a society where reform would mean an endless road towards greater justice. And they wanted debate to be something public and transparent, consisting of words that deliver meaning instead of serving to conceal it. What else can be drawn from those events? When you look at how Canada was put together, it is clear that our society is not the product of economic leadership or economic ideas or economic impetus. The leadership in the creation of Canada came not from those forces but from reform-minded doctors, lawyers, farmers. Many of them were ex-revolutionaries or almost revolutionaries. And they stood for things like universal public education and against seigniorial rights in Quebec. In other words, they stood against the essential elements of privilege of that time. What else can you draw from this history? You can see that in a healthy society language and action are closely linked. A society is not simply what it says it is, nor what the laws or the constitutions fix as rules of behaviour; that is not enough. The terrible confusion that has grown worse and worse in our society stems from the conflicting messages of a moral and social contract on the one hand and a commercial contract on the other. Today it is almost impossible to draw the line between the two because the forces of corporatism are so strong that the two contracts have been run together. And run together, of course, the more careful, complex contract of the public interest disappears under the simplistic steamroller of the commercial contract, the contract of self-interest. With that comes the idea that education is merely utilitarian training. We all know that legal training and business training are now the two basic disciplines we emphasize in educating our youth. These are the disciplines essential for a corporatist society, for a society that is based on management. So to go around declaring that we live in a democracy is mere comfort food, a sort of pabulum for the prematurely senile. It is a way of trying to get out of the debate about what a democracy is, and about whether we are really living in one, and about whether it is in danger if we are. At the heart of the political after-dinner speech is that Churchillian phrase about our system of government being the worst, except for all the others. This is part of what I would call the comparative approach. We're a democracy; Zaire isn't; aren't you happy about that? But the comparative approach to looking at your own civilization is a form of self-delusion. We should be looking more closely at ourselves, at the tensions within our own society. We have to accept the idea that within each society there are contradictions and tensions that reveal what kind of community it really is. As I've said elsewhere, the tension in the West is the same tension originally set out between the Socratic view and the Platonist view. (f.3) The Socratic humanist side is doubt-filled, seeking equilibrium. The elitist Platonist view is filled with absolute answers and ideology, and it leaves only the micro-economics, micro-sociology, micro-management to human action. In the elitist society, intelligence is narrowed and reduced to the work of the specialist, and the society is always seen as a pyramid, a pyramid of power. The Socratic view trusts the human being, and knows that legitimacy is based on the individual, while the Platonist view fears the citizen and believes legitimacy is interest-based. Both the Socratic and the Platonist have been found in the Western world for several thousand years now. But today the Platonist fear-based model dominates, formalized as corporatism, while the humanist, democratic model is on the defensive. Compare the status of the humanities in the present-day university to that of the business school. At the University of Toronto, Harold Innis established himself as perhaps the greatest economist and philosopher this country has yet produced; he pioneered the areas of thought where McLuhan and others would follow. Fittingly, there is a college named after Innis, and they recently built a residence in his name, and beside that the university built its new business school. There is a very striking contrast when you stand in front of these two buildings, the Innis building and the business school. An extremely talented architect did everything he could to avoid having the Innis residence look as if he had no money to spend on it. The result is that you have on one side a palace of marble, where all the finishings are of the finest materials; on the other, the humble status of the Innis building is revealed even in the quality of its bricks. In today's university, there just isn't a lot of money for thinking and doubting in the humanities; the priority is on narrow training. Side by side, these two buildings are dramatic illustrations of what is happening. Business schools are trade schools, and there is nothing wrong with that; we need trade schools. But it is not clear what they are doing in universities. They could very easily be set up as independent institutions financed by the private businesses that want people trained to be useful to the private

sector, to act in a certain way. And I think they would do a better job under such a system because they would be more attached to reality and less likely to contribute to the lack of creativity we see in our economy at this time. Looking at our whole society as if it were a commercial balance sheet has blinkered our institutions of education and government, and the citizens to whom they are supposed to be accountable. THE ideologues of the left and the right tend to talk about our society in terms of a great intellectual schism. For the last quarter century they have discussed how the left is descended from Rousseau and the right is descended from Burke. This is a completely non-sensical argument. Both Burke and Rousseau would reject this idea if they were around to defend themselves, and probably they would join forces to do so. The division that has emerged in our society suggests that there are two proposed absolute truths and that one must be correct, that only one must ultimately win out. The humanist approach involves a much more inclusive view of ideas. It moves, I think, beyond ideology and absolute truths. It asks itself about thinkers and about ideas -- what was the intent, and what was the effect of the words of a Rousseau or a Burke? The relatively modern philosopher who is most typical of our system today is Hobbes, a man who wrote about the impossibility of controlling human beings without fear. The whole Hobbesian idea of the constructive use of fear is formalized in a corporatist society in structures that are based on a carrot-and-stick principle. That is essentially how our careers are organized and how power works in the West. It has evolved into a highly civilized version of what Hobbes proposed 350 years ago. Consider a little story in the Hobbesian context. It is about an old lady walking in January along a city street through the narrow path cleared of ice and snow. It's rush hour, and there's a lot of traffic. A fit young man or woman is coming along in the other direction on his or her way home from the gym. Put yourself in the position of the younger person. You're in a hurry. She is in your way. There are four ways in which you can deal with this situation -- four categories of people. The quickest, the most efficient, is simply to push her into the traffic. You won't be caught; she's frail, you're strong. It's already dark, and no other pedestrians are around to see. She'll be killed, so she won't talk. It's fairly risk free. How many would do this? How many murderers are there? Perhaps .01 per cent of the population? The second option is that you would like to push her but are afraid of being caught. How many? -- .3 per cent of the population? The third category believes that everyone else belongs to category one or two: will push or wants to push. Of course Hobbes believes that. He is convinced that everybody wants to push the little old lady into traffic, which means that Hobbes wants to push her himself, otherwise why would he believe it? How many Hobbesians are there? -- 3, 4, 5 per cent? Finally there are those of us who would merely say, "Good evening, ma'am," stand aside, and let her pass. Hobbes seems unaware that they exist, doesn't give a thought to perhaps 95 per cent of the population. But we live in a corporatist society, and so two questions must be asked. Will society reward you for pushing the little old lady into the traffic in the equivalent situation in whatever it is you do for a living? Worse still, will society punish you for not pushing? The Hobbesian approach has a low opinion of the citizen, and it denies the very healthy schizophrenic tension in society. It further denies the citizen as the source of legitimacy. Just look at the origin of the Western idea: Socrates and Plato. The original tension comes out of the two pens, so to speak, of a single man who is speaking for two people.(f.4) From its very beginnings it is a question of tension, of contradiction. If we can come to terms with this idea of permanent tension, as opposed to solving problems, then we can accept that doubt lies at the core of a healthy society. I suppose what I'm saying could be interpreted as simplistic pedantry, but I can only defend myself by saying that it is not as simplistic or pedantic as most of the great intellectual "truths" of the last quarter century. Over the last 25 years we have been showered by a series of absolute truths made absolute by expert elites who are either selling them or who passively accept them. Within the social sciences in particular we have had a problem recognizing that there can be more than one truth at the same time. And so one great truth comes to the fore, only to be assaulted by social scientists who cannot accept it; in time the dissidents manage to install their own great truth, which will inevitably come under attack by advocates of the next great truth. Having witnessed such a parade of ultimate truths, why is it so difficult to accept that there may be more than one? GLOBALIZATION, trade, debt, competition, privatization -- one could go on and on. I need not even put adjectives around the words. Each one is shorter than the Holy Trinity, just one word, and on hearing it you know exactly what the embellishing argument is. And yet each of these ideas is neither true nor false; they are very interesting ideas, and they are certainly worth discussion. But I am not convinced that they are worthy of the atmosphere of religiosity that surrounds them. I am not convinced that any of them is a

revealed truth. Take, for example, trade. Does a continuous increase in the volume of trade bring prosperity to a society? I don't know. We have had remarkable net annual growths in our country's volume of trade for the last ten or fifteen years. And yet during those years the economic crisis in Canada, and in the West in general, has become steadily worse. So clearly you can't just say that the way out of our economic difficulties is increased trade; we should really be having a meaningful discussion: What kind of trade are we trying to secure? What are we trading, and what are we getting in return? In what context? With what national and international organizations? Perhaps some trade is destructive, some constructive. Perhaps circumstances which we change can change those categories. You must have such a discussion. But we can't seem to foster this exchange because our society's religion assures us that we are already in command of the great truth and that anybody who doesn't accept this great truth is naive in some way and doesn't understand the mechanisms at work, mechanisms that only the highly skilled analyst can fathom. You need only ask the simple questions about trade or debt and you suddenly realize that what is offered as proof is actually circumstantial. No serious scientist would take such evidence and claim it as proof. In fact real scientists talk about illustrations or possibilities. They don't announce: "I have the answer." Even when they make a discovery, it is not an answer, it is merely another question on the way to another question. We have lost the ability to take a deep breath and say, "Let's take an inclusive look at what our problems are. What are the real sources of inflation? What is inflationary growth?" There are a whole series of questions attached to that, attached to the role of the money markets, attached to property speculation, attached to the way we measure inflation. There are dozens of questions involved in these matters. But none of those questions is allowed to rise to the surface; we are only allowed to discuss the simple question of the tolerable rate of inflation. What I am describing is the victory of econometrics over the broad, intelligent, inclusive view of economics pioneered in Canada by Harold Innis. Corporatism reduces the citizen to a function which owes loyalty to a corporation by contract or by social pressure. The higher we rise in this system, the more skills and knowledge we acquire, the more society expects us to be passive in return for having been permitted to climb the ladder. In this context, language becomes dialect or nonsense, and I'm going to quote to you now from the third annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada, signed by the clerk of the privy council. In the section dealing with "Rethinking the Role of Government in the Modernization of the Public Service," we find the heading: "Client service is what counts. The changing needs and perspectives of clients must be the basis of program and service delivery." Is the citizen now a client of government? A client is somebody who walks into a store and buys something and walks out. We own the government! It's our government! This logic of clients belongs to the essential but fairly low level of civilization that is known as commerce. Now don't misunderstand me; I'm in commerce; I sell books. We are all, one way or another, in commerce. But let us remember what history is and let us remember of what it is constructed. Commerce is a very valuable second- or third-level occupation in society. That's all it is, and that's why throughout history people who are in commerce like to do other things as well once they succeed, because it is not very satisfying within itself. The Latin definition of cliens: "one who hears, obeys." Webster's original dictionary of 1828 offers three definitions: "Among the Romans, a citizen who put himself under the protection of a man of distinction and influence who was called his patron. Hence in modern usage too, one who applies to a lawyer or counsellor for advice and direction A dependant. Clientship: a state of being under the protection of a patron. Once you accept a word you accept what the word means, what it carries with it, what it has been carrying with it for 2,000 years in this case. Whether you want it to mean that or not, once you start using it, it means that. Every time I talk to someone in government, within 15 minutes the word "client" comes up as the word for the citizen. This word excludes completely the idea of the public good. It centres the citizen's relationship to government on two dangerous ideas: that legitimacy lies with the one who holds power, and that the state is just another company buying and selling things. Once you have said that the citizen has a commercial relationship with the state, you have automatically eliminated the idea of equal access. The sentence which has the word "client" in it has the word "contract" in it, the word "competition" in it, the word "efficiency," the word "market." Coming from the mouth of the clerk of the privy council it is as revolutionary as if she had begun to explain Canadian government using quotations from Karl Marx. We have moved so far in this direction that the moment we begin to talk about "defending" or "saving" public services we feel as if we have succumbed to romanticism and nostalgia. "These were such noble institutions that we really must try to save them, even though there's no money."

This is the voice of the defeated, running from the battlefield and trying to save a few swords on the way out. The whole structure of the language has already convinced us that the battle is lost. We have accepted a language that delegitimizes the democratic state and the role of the citizen. "Efficiency" is a perfectly decent word, but we must remember that it has several meanings. In our country, enormous amounts of electricity are delivered; water is delivered; even the mail is actually delivered, despite what people say. The public sector, in what it is asked to do, is much more efficient than the private sector because it is capable of long-term delivery. The efficiency of the private sector is another kind of efficiency based on the short to medium term and on profit. That sector is incapable of delivering water each day over a period of 100 years because it has to buy and sell companies and make profit, and in the meantime things go wrong: pipes burst, equipment wears out. We no longer know the difference between efficiency in its public sense and efficiency in its private sense. When we accept the idea of the citizen as a client we are in effect depriving ourselves of our only mechanism of power. It should not be surprising in that context that we are losing all the arguments on such matters as debt. The individual is allowed to become indebted. And companies are allowed to live on debt; they've never been so indebted. Yet in province after province, in state after state, laws are being passed forbidding governments to go into debt. What is an anti-debt law for a government? It is a way to make the single available mechanism of the citizen incapable of working because the government cannot raise cash as it needs it. Such legislation is about to be passed in Quebec, and has been passed in Manitoba. California is almost bankrupt because of its "balanced budget" law. The real issues surrounding tax and debt have to do with corporations having gone from paying over 40 per cent of the national budget to approximately 13 per cent. We should be talking about the rapid creation of international agreements on higher minimum tax levels for corporations in order to get at the main sources of money. This is not a matter of attacking capitalism, which is a valuable and necessary process. Remember, the private sector did very well in the 1950s and '60s when it was assuming a reasonable share of the public budget. So long as we cannot tax the main sources of income at reasonable levels, the public interest will remain in a financial crisis. That is why we are falling deeper and deeper into the marginalia of fundraising: sales taxes, gambling, and the like. Look at the history of civilization, the history of economics, even biblical history, and you will see what it means when a state begins to finance itself by encouraging the citizenry to gamble. (f.5) And while there is a bit of a debate in the newspapers, the universities are almost silent. The massive elite of which we are a part frets about the funding of its own institutions, but has little to say as governments act "decisively" to "put our financial house in order." LET me repeat something I've written before, a little idea of mine on how human beings work. We basically work through problems in a process of four steps. First, we identify reality. Second, having identified it, we consider reality, a process of doubting, thinking. And that is the moment when we really are human beings, because even a dog can identify reality. But only a human being can go beyond reaction to think in the larger sense: "What does that mean?" The third thing is to decide what we are going to do, not the absolute answer, not the ideological answer, but just something we can try, and if that doesn't work we'll try something else or perhaps combine different strategies. And finally, having made a decision, we move to the fourth stage: we manage the result. Today we are obsessed by the third and fourth stages. We have come to believe that we elect our leaders to handle decision making, and we educate our elites to manage. But if somebody hasn't worked through the first two steps – identifying reality and considering it – then decision making and managing mean nothing; anybody can make a decision and then respond to its repercussions. Identifying and thinking are the steps requiring intelligence and skill. This misidentification of what we require from leadership is one of the explanations for our current problems. Our leaders make decisions without considering what it is that we are trying to accomplish as a society, as human beings. Then they become obsessed with trying to manage the countless little details that result from their decisions – having become convinced, like the rest of us, that the larger picture is quite beyond our control. The vast majority of the work that is done in education today is concerned with management. And this is not happening only in the business schools; there is now a managerial approach towards the arts. I have pointed out before that the word "manager" is from the French *faire le menage*, which is to "do house cleaning." Have we really spent millennia creating this civilization in order to have its gigantic elite become experts in housekeeping? Is this why people defended the barricades in Paris? Is this why LaFontaine and Baldwin worked together, breaking down so many barriers, so that we could fret about the myriad details of our societal housekeeping? According to

Statistics Canada: "since 1975 Canada has added 3.1 million new jobs. Two million managerial professional, 1.1 million other white collar (i.e., clerks, sales, and service)." This is one of the great explanations for our inability to make our society work. Most people aren't working; they're managing. What I've noticed increasingly is that as criticism of their inutility rises managers give themselves new titles in order to pretend that they're not actually managers at all, but "doers." In many ways today resembles the middle of the eighteenth century, when there was a scholastic blockage, when ethics were marginalized, when there existed a rottenborough approach to public policy. Today the corporalist elites are gradually turning Western democracies into factories of interest, devoid of responsibility. Corporatism replaces dignity with the highly sophisticated fear typical of the courtier reliant on a patron. The eighteenth-century courtier lived with fear every day because as an individual he or she did not really exist. Such a person only existed as a client in the shadow of the patron. Our society is made up of pyramids of power within which there are endless levels, with each manager a courtier to someone higher and a patron to someone lower. Every day our elites are humiliated and humiliate others at the appropriate levels. Self-humiliation is a form of self-loathing, and that explains why so much of what comes out of our elites is like state-sponsored gambling -- filled with contempt for the citizen, whether a member of the elite or not. ALL a writer can do is to try to identify reality and to encourage people to consider that reality, to doubt. In other words, all a writer can do is to try to make language work. That's what I was trying to do in *The Doubter's Companion*, trying to create a new language that might act as a citizen's weapon. Corporatism's strength is the size and complexity of its system. We never see the edges of it; it seems to have no edges. But the weakness of corporatism is that basically it is all tactics; it is all micro-economics, micro-everything. And tactics in the end are, of course, self-destructive. Strategy is all about finding the key pivot that exploits the weakness in the tactics and thus makes the society turn. The key to the strategy, I believe, is consciousness and understanding. We must first understand that self-interest as a central principle of society reduces civilization to primary accountancy. It eliminates our skills. It eliminates the human genius that is essential to civilization. I have said that corporatism is based on fear. But corporatism itself has fears. It fears the release of human qualities. And it fears the uncontrolled. That is why the jewel of the modern university is the business school. And at the same time the ancient core of the university, the humanist core, is feeling increasingly marginal and financially expendable. There has never been so much money available in our society; the quantity of pieces of paper that are worth money has multiplied again and again over the last few decades. And yet there is so little money for the public interest. Why? Because in a corporatist society everything is added up on the basis of the self-interest of the constituent parts. It is a form of mathematics. It is a creative accountancy that is non-creative, in which you tally up the professors' salaries, and other costs for the various corporations; finally, you add them all up, designate the total as 100 per cent, and find that you have nothing left over. And the reason there is nothing left over is that at the beginning you put everything into an interest column. So, not surprisingly, there will be less and less left over for the public interest as the years go by. That is the form of logic which leads to the elimination of the genius necessary for civilization. LET me conclude by returning to LaFontaine and Baldwin, to the handshake between these two remarkable men. They were remarkable because they were capable of combining little personal ambition with enormous stubbornness about their ideas. These two men were able to stretch themselves through incredibly complex emotional and intellectual manipulations in order to find each other 155 years ago; they were able to step beyond local interests, beyond religious interests, beyond linguistic fears, beyond racial fears, beyond financial competition. They were able to reject the argument of the Family Compact and its "clients." These two men -- not ambitious but determined, with an astonishing belief in the public good -- through a handshake sealed their pact of moral obligation, of honour; and in so doing they recognized the absolute necessity not to be found lacking, the absolute necessity to say "no" to acquiescence to conformity. They said "no" to power unless the public good would be served. To people who are seduced by the corporatist stream of power, the very idea of personal responsibility reeks of naivete. Anybody who refuses power is naive. Refuse power? How can one refuse power? Get hold of power, and then maybe you can do some good! We all know that argument. That is what courtiers have always believed. The received wisdom of keeping your head down and your seat warm, which is so admired in our society, was also the received wisdom of the antechambers of Versailles. What Baldwin and LaFontaine understood was that if you served the public good, believed in it more than in your own ambition, and had the courage to say "no," you could cause society to pivot on its axis until it

faced in another direction. The refusal to acquiesce, as always, is the key to responsible individualism. The citizen's ability to reenergize democracy will depend on a prolonged state of clarity, and this is one of humanity's most valuable characteristics, what you might call "persistent stubbornness." Notes f.1 Dr William Warren Baldwin, one of the great figures of Canadian history, could be called the real founder of the Medicare idea in this country. With the aid of a number of friends, he opened and for many years ran, out of his own pocket, a free medical care hospital-hospice in Toronto. f.2 A year later, Baldwin would be defeated by partisan mobs in Canada West, and LaFontaine would clear the way for his reform partner's successful campaign in Rimouski. f.3 I discuss this in more detail in "Language and Lying -- the Return of Ideology," Queen's Quarterly 102/4 (Winter 1995). f.4 In "Language and Lying -- the Return of Ideology," I discuss Plato's attempt to subsume Socrates' ideas within his own. f.5 That is not to say that there will not always be some gambling. Personally, I like to gamble, but there is a difference between a society permitting some gambling and a government saying that the best way to raise money for the public sector is for the government to corrupt the citizenry. citizenry.

Word count: 5709

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