Intergovernmental Relations in Canada Donald Dennison Forum of Federations



Mechanisms of Intergovernmental Relations:
International Experiences and Challenges for Brazil
17 and 18 September 2003
Brasilia, Brazil

Overview of presentation:

- What kind of federation is Canada?
- What does this mean for intergovernmental affairs?
- How and why has the intergovernmental business grown?
- Examples of national and regional cooperation.
- Best practices.

... NOT Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité



... NOR Life, Liberty & the Pursuit of Happiness



... RATHER Peace, Order & Good Government



... the Peace Tower in front of Parliament in Ottawa

... Canadians identify with universal public health care

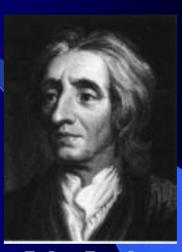






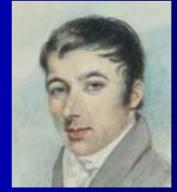
Different values when each country was founded:

USA: 18th Century individual liberties



John Locke

Canada: 19th Century social welfare



Robert Owen

Federalism & Values

Liberty

- Power is divided to maximum
- Series of checks and balances
- Separation of Executive and Legislative power
- "State's rights" vs. central government

Welfare

- Power is concentrated
- Emphasis on outcomes
- Executive and Legislative closely linked
- Unitary state

Canada: a vast land



Modern governance is aided by:

- Semi-autonomous units
- Decentralized decision-making
- Regional flexibility and responsiveness
- Local innovation

What drives intergovernmental relations in Canada?

- Constitution's approach of "watertight compartments" didn't work
- Traditional contest over division of powers
- Current battleground is recognition of roles
 & responsibilities

Major changes in intergovernmental affairs over the past 35 years:

- Growth in the regular "business" of government
- Constitutional development & reform
- Indigenous Canadians demand a seat at the table

What does intergovernmental relations mean today?

- 400 500 federal-provincial meetings per year
- First Ministers' conference including
 - Prime Minister
 - 10 provincial Premiers
 - 3 Northern Territories' leaders
 - A 2-3 day televised event

The new Canadian "industry" of intergovernmental relations:

- Provincial offices or departments of intergovernmental affairs
- Permanent secretariat funded by both levels

What was happening with constitutional reform?

- 1968- Prime Minister Trudeau began a full review
- 1976- Election of a separatist government in Quebec
- 1982- New constitution all provinces except Quebec sign
- 1987- Meech Lake Accord agreed upon, then fails
- 1992- Charlottetown Accord supported by parties, rejected by electorate

Styles of Federalism

- 1960s 1970s: Cooperative Federalism
- Mid-1970s 80s: Competitive Federalism
- 2000s: Reciprocal Federalism

Intergovernmental relations: a success story

Canadian Council
of Ministers of the Environment

CCME works to promote the cooperation and coordination of interjurisdictional issues such as

waste management, air pollution and toxic chemicals.

Canadian
Environmental
Quality
Guidelines

Canadian Council of Ministers for the Environment (CCME)

- Chairmanship rotates among all fourteen
 Ministers
- Permanent Secretariat
- Funded on a per capita basis
- Works collaboratively on harmonization of roles and responsibilities

Interprovincial Cooperation

- Annual Premiers' Conference since 1964
- New Quebec proposal to formalize a Council of the federation
- Regular meetings of Council of Ministers of Education
- Regional interprovincial cooperation
 - Western Premiers' Conference
 - Council of Atlantic Premiers

Atlantic Provinces



Eastern Provinces & New England States



Conclusion

- Canada was a federation by necessity, not by choice.
- Today, federalism offers the most modern approach to government.
- Effective intergovernmental machinery is required to make federalism work.
- Investment in machinery brings results.

Forum of Federations

An International Network on Federalism

Forum des fédérations

un réseau international sur le fédéralisme