

The "royal we": Caledon commentary ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Full article in pdf ^[2]

Summary:

Canada's Premiers had a jam-packed agenda at their recent meeting in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Despite the wide-ranging agenda, a clear message emerged. The Premiers would like to have a national partner with whom they can engage in conversation regarding their myriad challenges. Ottawa argues that it is better to let both orders of government - federal and provincial - take care of their respective areas of business. But while the provincial plate is overflowing, the federal cupboard seems bare.

Ottawa used to take a far more active interest in collaboration to improve the quality of life in the country. Stellar examples of cooperative federalism include the shared design and delivery of the National Child Benefit in 1998, joint work on the vision paper *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues* and the signing of ground-breaking agreements on early childhood development and child care in 2000 and 2003. One might say there was a prevailing sense at the time of the "royal we." This notion had nothing to do with pledging allegiance to the Queen - or even to a new royal baby. Rather, it had everything to do with a sense of national commitment and the need for all governments to talk together and, better still, work collaboratively to enhance the well-being of Canadians.

Region: Canada ^[3]

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