

No separation without tears, bank prez says

by Eric Atkins

Saying no to the Charlottetown accord will cost us all a lot of money, says Lloyd Atkinson, executive vice president of the Bank of Montreal.

A divided Canada would face a lower dollar and higher interest rates, worsening the current recession, Atkinson said at an Osgoode Hall constitutional conference last month.

"Do we sow in the minds of investors...a great deal of uncertainty or a great deal of fear about the safety and security of their investments?" Atkinson asked.

"Can we imagine separation without tears?"

The constitutional bickering and the possibility of a divided nation

make Canada less attractive to domestic and foreign investors, he said.

Predicting a steep drop in the value of the dollar, Atkinson warned higher interest rates would be necessary to support the dollar.

He admitted it is hard to accurately predict the economic effects of a sovereign Quebec.

In a recent report, the Royal Bank of Canada predicted rising unemployment rates, lower incomes and increased emigration to the United

States. The threat of economic instability appears to be the weapon of choice for the financial community in urging a Yes vote on Oct. 26.

Another study released by an all-party Quebec legislative committee concluded that the negative economic effects of sovereignty will be temporary.

Many expect Quebec to absorb

a portion of the national debt if they separate. Atkinson gave estimates of 16 per cent to 32 per cent although he noted that some international lawyers claim a sovereign Quebec would have no obligation to assume any part of Canada's national debt.

"A smaller Canada would have the second highest per capita debt in the world," Atkinson said.

A sovereign Quebec may not be included in the free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico. Since the agreements were formed between federal governments, Quebec may be excluded from the deals, Atkinson said.

A decisive Yes is the only way to end the constitutional debate once and for all, Atkinson predicted.

Calling grim economic predictions "alarmist", Reg Whittaker of York stated that long term costs may not be as high as economists predict, provided proper arrangements are made. If sovereignty is as harmful to Quebec as some economists say it is, a Quebec threatening sovereignty would be saying "your money or my life", instead of "your money or your life", according to Whittaker.

"I see nothing very impressive" in the constitutional package, said Alain Gagnon of McGill University. Historically, Quebec has always left the

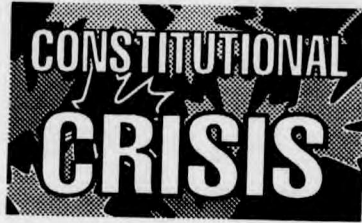
constitutional table with less than it came in with and the current round is no exception, he said.

The new proposal, far from an improvement, merely represents a continuation of the "status quo" for Quebec, said Gagnon.

While not calling himself a separatist, he added that "Canada, in and of itself, is not a winning proposition."

"The departure of Quebec might allow us to move on, just as it might allow Quebecers to move on" to a new agenda that includes feminist and environmental issues that are ignored in the current set of proposals, Roger Gibbins of the University of Calgary said.

Gibbins predicted a Yes vote on Oct. 26 will not end the constitutional debate. A new provincial government in Quebec may return to the bargaining table, according to Gibbins.



Won't get burned a third time

First Nations won't go back to table: Turpel

by Glen Eddie

A "No vote" on Oct. 26 could mean the end to aboriginal involvement in Canada's constitutional process, cautions Mary Ellen Turpel, head of the Assembly of First Nations's constitutional team.

"The dynamics that led to the aboriginal package are dynamics that will never be repeated," Turpel said at a recent conference at Osgoode Hall.

"We will never repeat the process again," she warned.

Turpel is also worried that if there is a "No vote" on Oct. 26 in Quebec, relations between the Quebecois and the First Nations "will reach a low below the low reached in 1990"

The constitutional deal would recognize aboriginal self-government as an "inherent right" and include guaranteed seats in Canada's Senate.

"Natives don't trust us," Raymond Giroux, a reporter for *Le Soleil* in Quebec City commented about the tension between Quebecois and aboriginal people.

According to Giroux, natives fear the "distinct society" clause because Quebec will trample their rights. Aboriginals also fear Quebec sovereignty might be worse and, if this happens, first nations there might try

to keep their territories as part of Canada, he added.

There is definite friction between aboriginal people and the Quebec government, York graduate student John Sallenave said this week in response to Turpel and Giroux's comments.

"As far as the record goes, there is no reason [for native people] to trust them. They got burnt at James Bay and they got burnt at Oka," said Sallenave, who is specializing in native affairs.

But he predicted certain representatives of aboriginal people will return to the negotiating table if the accord fails.

Some aboriginal women oppose the accord because they say they won't be protected under Canada's Charter of Rights. Some native groups do not recognize the assembly's authority to negotiate with Canada on their behalf.

Maude Barlow, national chair of the Council of Canadians during the conference discussion said she supported the gains of the native peoples but the legal text must be given out before she could support the accord.

"We don't need hockey stars and astronauts telling us to vote Yes," said Barlow. "What we want is the legal text."

Democracy needed to deal with Jane-Finch problems

Farrell says police out of touch

by Andil Gosine

Mandatory work with community groups and diverse representation within the police force are necessary to obtain fair treatment for Blacks from police, community activist Lennox Farrell says.

Such "democratization of the force," Farrell told a group of York students last week, "is very important if we are to improve as a society."

Farrell, chair of Ontario's Anti-Racism Advisory Working Group, was speaking at a seminar sponsored by York New Democrats last Thursday.

His concerns reflect the problems faced by members of the Jane and Finch community, where Farrell lives.

The issues that need to be addressed in his community have been misrepresented, Farrell argued. For example, cocaine use has been cited as a major problem, but while he called black drug dealers the "Black arm of the Ku Klux Klan," Farrell also charged that the drug issue has been manipulated by some police officers.

"In Etobicoke, the police tried to turn one youth into a stool pigeon. When he refused, they told another youth that [the first] was a stool pigeon and so the second youth executed [the first]."

Farrell said the situation does not seem to improve significantly over the years. Two weeks ago, sisters Janice Douse and Caron Baker complained of harassment by police officers who they said used excessive force and made racist remarks as they raided their North York house.

Such injustices have influenced Farrell's involvement with the Black Action Defense Committee, led by Dudley Laws, a man seen by some as a radical figure. But Farrell praised Laws as a rational leader "who has the guts to speak the truth."

Farrell also expressed his hope that York University would see the Jane-Finch community as "more of a neighbor," and invited students to become involved with groups to better the area.

"York can play a historic role in this community," he said.

Farrell also said he wishes Black

police officers could speak more readily of the problems in the force.

He suggests that the strategy of having police support other officers — regardless of their activities — is a factor in keeping some silent.

Farrell hopes solutions to prejudices within the police force can be devised by the new justice system task force set up last week by the Ontario Attorney-General Howard Hampton and headed by Black activist Margaret Gittens.

He resisted arguments from law students present who said they were discouraged that yet another study was being done but little action was taking place, responding that this was the first time the Black community has been so prominently involved on a government task force.

Farrell also voiced his disappointment over the low employment of Blacks near the predominantly Black Jane-Finch community.

"There is a lot of work here. But walk across to the schools, to the malls, and the employees are mostly White," he said.

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