



By
Sean Riley

In the spring of 1987, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney cloistered the ten provincial premiers in a conference room at Meech Lake in Quebec. The purpose of this secretive First Ministers' meeting was to get Quebec to sign Canada's Constitution, something Pierre Trudeau had failed to do in 1982. Mulroney wanted dearly to be perceived as having accomplished something that Trudeau could not do. Thus, the First Ministers met, and, in great haste, signed a constitutional agreement, that, if ratified, will set the tone, flavour, and future history of our country.

There is no question that the Meech Lake Accord achieved its goal of getting Quebec's concurrence to the Constitution. The question at hand is: at what price has this goal been achieved? A growing number of informed Canadians contend that Mulroney just gave too much power away to the other nine provinces in order to get them to agree to Quebec's 'Distinct Society' status. This, coupled with Bourassa's other demands, might just prove to finish off Canadian Federalism, the glue that has held ten diverse provinces together under the guiding hand of a strong federal government since 1867.

Mulroney certainly gave the provinces a big bag of goodies. To name just a few, he gave them the power to opt out of future shared-cost programs such as a national day care system. All they would have to do is set up a compatible program. Thus, the incentive for provinces to cooperate in setting meaningful national standards of living for Canadian citizens will be removed. Is this progress? Indeed, who would benefit save a few provincial politicians who might savour the prospect of diverting federal money as they please? That is just the tip of the iceberg. Suppose the Péquists were returned to power in Quebec. The 'Distinct Society' clause would give constitutional effect to the "two nations" and "special status" concepts that Péquists fought for years to get but were met with defeat in a democratic referendum. Were the Meech Lake Accord ratified by Manitoba and New Brunswick and a separatist government returned to power, they could conceivably pursue sovereignty-association with the blessings of all of Canada, as would be their constitutional right. Think about it. And this is not all.

The provinces would have the right to appoint Senate and Supreme Court members, which would be tantamount to putting the federal government under provincial trusteeship. As well, under a new constitutional amending formula, every province would have the power to veto any future constitutional change, thus making the Meech Lake Accord's vast transfer of power irrevocable, as at least one province would always be counted on to balk at returning central power. Canada would become increasingly balkanized, with devious, isolated, parochial states adding up to a once proud nation being little more than a collection of largely independent states joined in sovereignty-association. Is this the direction we want Canada to move toward?

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Teaching Twins Win Memorial Bursary

By STEPHANIE LONDON

Twins are known to have many things in common, and Pam and Paula Aasen, daughters of M. Francis Hickmott of Gondola Point, N.B., are no exception. Not only have the twins just graduated with bachelor of education degrees from the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, but this fall they are also both entering the one-year diploma of advanced undergraduate study (DAUS) program and concentrating in special education.

What's more, they both 1988 recipients of the Sheri Lynne McCordick Memorial Bursary, an award given annually to a student in the counselling or special education area of the DAUS program.

This bursary commemorates the 20 year-old Fredericton resident and UNB education student who lost her life in a tragic accident Jan. 8, 1985. Since then, family and friends have remembered Sheri Lynne McCordick's birthdays and the anniversary of her death with donations. There is even a local bridge club which regularly adds to the fund. Supporters plan to keep Ms. McCordick's memory alive, and help many students in years to come.

The value of the award is dependent on yearly donations

and therefore varies from year to year. Three bursaries have been given to date. In 1986, the award amounted to \$525, and in 1987 it was \$590. This year, the twins will share the bursary, valued at \$524, to help them in their study of special education.

"As long as I can remember, I've wanted to be in education," says Paula Aasen, who adds that her twin feels the same way. "I want to help others improve themselves and be the best they can be." This

past summer, the sisters worked at Carleton Kirk Lodge nursing home as recreation directors. The previous summer, they worked at Camp Rotary, which holds summer recreation camps for both the mentally and physically disabled. It was there, they say, that they really decided to specialize in special education.

After completing the DAUS program, the twins would both like to teach outside of New Brunswick for awhile, but eventually return to the province to stay.



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