

# YES

THE FACTS SAY "YES"

On October 26th, a "YES" vote means:

- **New guarantees for regional development:** The Charlottetown Accord entrenches the federal government's commitment to the promotion of regional economic development to reduce disparity. This commitment to diversify and expand our economy will mean more jobs and new jobs to the benefit of all New Brunswickers and Canadians.

- **An equitable sharing of wealth between provinces:** Under the Charlottetown Accord, the principle of transfer payments will become a constitutional guarantee. This will ensure that less prosperous provinces will be able to deliver programs comparable to those in the wealthier provinces.

- **Better roads and infrastructure:** The Charlottetown Accord will ensure that the comparable infrastructures will be provided in each province or territory. Modern transportation and communication links will help ensure all Canadians will be able to compete economically.

- **Strong regional representation in an elected Senate:** The Charlottetown accord proposes an elected Senate, with each province having six senators and each territory having one. Together, the Atlantic provinces will have just under 40% of the total number of Senate seats.

- **Economic renewal:** The Accord commits the federal and provincial governments to the principle of the preservation and development of Canada's economic union. The objectives of the free movement of workers, goods and services, full employment and sustainable and equitable development are included. Also included is a mechanism, that being the annual meeting of the first ministers, to reduce barriers to interprovincial trade.

- **The equality of linguistic communities:** As outlined in the Canada Clause, Canadians are committed to the respect for individual and collective human rights and freedoms of all people. We are also committed to the vitality and development of official language minority communities throughout Canada. The equality of both linguistic communities in New Brunswick is also recognized.

- **Comprehensive social services and benefits:** The accord would commit the federal and provincial governments to a social union, the objectives of which include comprehensive, universal and accessible health care, the provision of adequate social services and benefits, and the provision of high quality primary and secondary education.

- **Reduction of overlap and duplication:** The transfer of responsibility to the provinces of certain areas of jurisdiction will eliminate wasteful duplication at the federal and provincial levels.

- **Aboriginal self-government:** The accord calls for negotiations between governments and native peoples to conclude self government agreements within the next five years. This is long overdue as natives could not do a worse job governing themselves than the other Canadian governments have done over the past 125 years. This will give them the opportunity to attempt to make their own

# THE GREAT CANADIAN DEBATE

*"I confess that there are several parts of this constitution which I do not approve, but I doubt whether any other convention may be able to make a better constitution. For when you assemble men to have the advantage of their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble all their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interest, their selfish views. From such an assembly can a perfect production be expected? I consent to this constitution because I expect no better and because I am not sure it is not the best."*

Those words were those of Thomas Jefferson during the debate on the United States' constitution, but they ring true in the context of Canada's current constitutional debate. The Charlottetown Accord, like the BNA Act of 1867, is a product of compromise - no one province or group got everything it had wanted at the outset, negotiators from all sides had to compromise on some issues in exchange for gains on other fronts. The end result of this process was an agreement that the leaders of all the provinces and territories, as well as the aboriginal leaders and the federal government, could give their support to.

Unanimous consent on a constitutional accord is something that Canadian leaders have been trying to attain for a long time: between 1927 and 1979 there were 10 unsuccessful attempts to gain agreement to bring the constitution home from Britain, and in 1982 the Trudeau government repatriated the constitution despite Quebec's objections, and the last failure came in 1987 with the collapse of the Meech Lake Accord. The Charlottetown accord has finally achieved the goal of unanimous consent that has eluded Canadians for over sixty years, to turn our backs on it now could mean squandering away a unique opportunity for national unity.

The accord should be judged as what it is, a package deal born of compromise. And it is for this reason that it cannot be voted on in a "line item" referendum as some have suggested should have been done. It is true that almost everyone can find something that they do not agree with in the agreement or something they believe should have been included that wasn't, but to reject it on one or two points in hopes that the perfect document will come along eventually isn't rational if one considers that there are Canadians elsewhere whose support of the agreement depends on the inclusion of precisely the same point you are opposed to. Without compromise there can only be deadlock and division. The deal must be considered as a whole and with generosity and goodwill, and in this light it is a good agreement for all Canadians.

The opponents of the accord would like Canadians to believe that if there is a 'no' result on October 26th we could have a moratorium on constitutional negotiations through the life of the next parliament. But what responsible federal government could sit on its hands and do nothing if a separatist elements in Quebec force a referendum on sovereignty, which would not be an unlikely scenario in the wake of a 'no'? Clearly the constitution would once again become an issue after a no vote, except that discussion will become even more bitter and acrimonious with all parties defending hardened and uncompromising positions.

Even after a 'yes' vote we would be talking about the constitution, as opponents are consistently pointing out, but aren't the provinces, the feds and native groups negotiating agreements constantly regardless of whether or not the constitution is on the table? And isn't it better to discuss further modifications in a spirit of unity and cooperation rather than one of divisiveness and mistrust? Before you can build a house you have to have a foundation, and the Charlottetown Accord should be the foundation for Canada.

The opponents of the deal, an unlikely group of allies, have failed to provide the Canadian people with what their alternative to the Charlottetown Accord is. Perhaps this is because they are unable to. The Parti Quebecois and the Bloc Quebecois' opposition is based on Quebec not getting enough while the opposition of COR and Reform is based largely on Quebec getting too much! They don't talk about alternatives because they can't agree on one. The alternative they appear to support is clear: NO compromise, NO goodwill, and therefore NO Canada.

But does Quebec get too much? The opponents of the deal in this region often show their COR stripes and claim that we are 'giving in' to Quebec's 'unreasonable demands', but what is so unreasonable? Quebec gets a recognition of its 'distinct society' in terms of its "French speaking majority, unique culture and civil law tradition", these characteristics of Quebec have been recognized since the Quebec Act of 1774 and were also acknowledged by the Constitutional Act of 1791 and also in the Constitution Act, 1867, which established Quebec as a province with special characteristics. Clearly distinct society is not actually something that is new, it is a recognition of historical fact and present reality.

Quebec also gets a guaranteed minimum of 25% of the representation in the house of commons, but this is in line with their current percentage of the population of the country. In fact only ten years ago Quebec had 26% of the commons seats. It is true that if populations outside Quebec were to grow rapidly they would have a slightly greater representation in the commons than they are entitled to in a strict representation by population systems, but they are not likely to gain such a skewed representation as are the Atlantic provinces have. The Atlantic provinces have guaranteed numbers of seats (NB has 10, NS has 11, and PEI 4) which do not reflect the size of their population. Could you see PEI agreeing to having only 1 or 2 seats? Critics seem to enjoy criticizing Quebec's gains on representation in the commons but neglect to mention those of the maritime provinces.

In the Supreme Court Quebec is guaranteed 3 of the 9 seats, but this is something that they have always had. Because Quebec has a tradition of civil law while the rest of the country uses a legal system based on common law it needs at least three seats on the Supreme Court. Why? Because it is necessary to have at least 3 Supreme Justices to hear a case, and cases from Quebec require judges with an understanding of the civil code. Given this it is not unreasonable at all for Quebec to have these three positions allocated to it.

The Charlottetown Accord is not a sell-out to Quebec or to anyone else, it is a fair compromise that will benefit all Canadians. It has taken us over sixty years to reach such a consensus and it should not be wasted, we may not be able to find such agreement again. Consider the merits of the deal and consider the dubious agendas of many of its opponents. The best option is obvious: vote 'YES' on October 26th, for the good of all Canadians.

# NO

by Wilmot F. Ross

I have been asked why a student should vote "NO" in the Referendum 92 election. In order for me to do this, I shall try to make you aware of the reason I consented to do this. From experiences in the past and actual experiences of others told to me at times in confidence, plus loud protestations of outrage, almost hate, and because of my concern for you, who are in a group from which will come our future leaders, business people, etc. who will guide our nation in the future, I will delve into the past and bare my feelings to you.

I will not use names but some who read this will be some of those who made these remarks and others who can relate will be wondering if it is them I am writing about. I hope they will all forgive me. If not, in my concern for the future, I will bear any name they care to call me. The truth must come out!

First of all, I must say I have traveled far, my own children have played with children from other nations and many different backgrounds in Canada and on the continent of Europe. As a great grandfather, I am proud that they have had one of the greatest benefits that younger children can have. They have learned to communicate with their peers, look them in the eye as equals and stand tall in the belief that everyone is equal. I believe they are a good example of "Army Brats". I have watched with pride as they made the adjustments required to exist on equal footing with peers who are different. I have watched them have quick scuffles and spats, and have closed by ears as sometimes they used words I would rather not hear, knowing that these little upheavals are soon forgotten. In this, my first family, I have a daughter, my eldest child, who has worked her way up to a very responsible position. I am very proud of her. I have three sons who have, through perseverance, done very well in their chosen professions or trades. My feeling of pride in them all is well justified. My youngest son is a mayor!

I have a family which, though I did not officially adopt them, I assumed the responsibility for in the formative years of their lives. Three girls and one boy. Thank God that they too are making their mark in life. Two girls have university degrees, but because of Bill 88 cannot find positions in New Brunswick at the present that they have been trained for. As a result of the impact on their lives by a Bill that creates walls around schools in our educational system which separates children in the name of language and culture. I feel sorry for children who are not allowed to grow naturally and through experience acquire a culture truly Canadian. I happen to believe that a culture to be strong, a real Canadian culture, must grow by allowing our children to mingle and exchange ideas.

My vision of perfection in education is a school system that teaches both official languages at least to high school graduation. Other countries do this naturally. I believe to speak more than one language is a wonderful thing to acquire. I am proud to say that I have known persons who can speak as high as seven.

I hear many stories that rend my heart. For example, not far from where I sit is a unilingual English husband and wife. They have a daughter proficient in French. This daughter finished out her education in Grenoble, France so that she would qualify for a position in our province. She is a well-qualified nurse. You would think she had it made. It is, indeed, strange that in a bilingual province, there is no place for her. She now lives in the U.S., has a fine position in a hospital and says she will never return to New Brunswick. A great loss to a province which, because of its bilingual make-up, is supposed to be the window of a bilingual nation in the future. Her cultural background is not right, not pure! The mixing of cultures causes tolerance and mutual respect. This is much better than diversity which is fostered in our province which has the opposite effect. What good is a school system which is based on bloodlines if a child loses the right to communicate, mingle with and work beside childhood friends.

There are two sides to every story. Just recently, a lady who could not speak a word of English when she arrived in this area, she still speaks French in her home and with her family. She speaks perfect English, she has the best of two worlds. She recently moved her child from French Immersion - why? "Because the little snit dares to tell me that I and her grandmother can't speak French." She felt her daughter was being turned into a snob. I have heard many stories like this.

In your future, many of you will have children of your own. Ask yourself this question, "Do I really want my children to grow up in a school system like this? Do I want to explain to them why they cannot mingle with other children just because they are different. Should I help build the wall even higher or should I help tear it down before it is too late?"

Bill 88, if once entrenched in our Constitution, is there to stay. Backed by a proposed Senate which will control French language and culture, not only in New Brunswick, but Canada wide, solely by its French speaking members, will ensure that it is never altered or rescinded. This Bill, alone, once it is entrenched, will set a precedent. This means, in effect, that similar Bills in other provinces over time will take effect in every province and territory, making legislated bilingualism a fact Canada wide, except for Quebec!

I will hope that you will read the full text of the Constitution proposals, discuss it, attend information seminars. I hope you have a sense of responsibility to your country to stand on your own feet and make the right decision, just as I hope my children will. I, of course, am going to vote NO!

In my lifetime, I have remarried, I have four stepchildren, two of whom were fortunate enough to move to Ontario and are well established there. They will never return to New Brunswick to work because of Bill 88. The other two face the possibility of migrating too, just because many years ago, their forebears did not have the required ethnic background. That is another reason for me to say, NO!

As a veteran of World War II, I cannot say yes, to a proposition that, if it becomes law, will establish in my own country, a "distinct society". I believe to be a Canadian is a distinct in all its own. The United Nations has made that statement. The country many peoples would like to be accepted by as citizens. Why should one province stand alone and demand our mutual distinctiveness, be its sole property. Why should we appease such as these. Why would any citizen of this country wish to become second class - not me! Just another reason to say NO!

I attended a 'yes' meeting of late. I watched a 'yes' spokesman supposedly go through an exercise as a salesman selling a car. As he added extras, he removed others to explain how compromise worked.

I thought, yes! You have produced a vehicle at great cost using taxpayers' money. You have created it so that if some parts are faulty, they can never be replaced, no matter how defective. You have produced a horn and sound system (yes forums) for the salesman to use to drown out all objections. But you have also incorporated defective safety equipment. The essential parts that are so important in the make up of any vehicle are missing. The safeguards that protect our rights as individual citizens are not a part of this proposed Constitution.

Would you buy a vehicle that once in motion in the event it showed on try out various faults, when you applied the brakes would not stop! How would you feel if, by some miracle, you got stopped and the salesman informed you that by consenting to try out this vehicle you were stuck with it and must pay the price! As a matter of fact, there is no replacement warranty on defective parts! Would you buy a deal like this? This vehicle has a five hundred million dollar horn, very high priced sales persons, a large advertising budget and no protection for you and I as individuals. Let the buyers beware! Once in motion, this vehicle cannot be stopped, defective parts replaced nor improved. There are no guarantees.

I know what I would say - NO!!

A friend of mine who came from Germany made this statement, "Wilmot, distinct society has a curious smell. I smelled it in Germany in 1933". He went on to say that is the reason he came to Canada, became a Canadian, his fear that the Nazi's would rise again! You have the best weapon in the world to ensure that a situation like this never comes to pass. A pencil with which you can put an "X" in the "NO" circle for the sake of our country. We cannot a nation build on diversity, nor by putting up walls. Not one! I would want to live in. I am 67, so your decision with many years ahead of you is much more important than mine. I am voting "no" for your sake and to save our country. I beg you to go down in history as the saviors of our Canada, to say "NO".

No matter how you vote, each one of us will vote with a reason in mind. Rather than having total agreement or disagreement with the proposed constitution, most people seem to have "balanced" the pros and cons of each choice. It is as though each person's priorities were put on a scale and the way the scale tips, it determines the vote. It will be impossible to know what each vote actually means. A "no" vote in New Brunswick would not mean the same thing as a "no" vote in B.C. or Quebec.

Many people that responded to the Brunswickian's questionnaire suggested that each clause in the Constitution should be voted on separately. Many people are not trusting that the proposed constitution will resemble the actual constitution that is eventually written.

One response to our questionnaire sums up these issues quite well: "I would rather vote yes or no on each issue in the constitution rather than yes or no to the entire thing. However, there are more disadvantages to voting no so I'll probably vote yes even though I'm still not sure."

The best you can do now is to inform yourself and formulate your own decision based on individual priorities. Copies of the Draft Legal Text can be found outside Room 35 in the SUB. Pick one up and decide for yourself which way the scale will tip.

## Questionnaire Results

Number = 123 (handed in and random selection interviews)

1. Do you plan to vote on the Premiers' Charlottetown agreement, i.e. the Constitutional Referendum?

90% YES 2% NO

2. Why or why not?

25% said it was their duty and right to vote.

3. Are you concerned about the outcome of the vote?

80% Yes 20% No

4. How much do you know about the Constitutional Agreement?

2% Nothing 52% Minimal 31% Follow closely

5. Do you think a Referendum is even necessary?

50% Yes 42% No

6. Do you consider Quebec to be a distinct society?

50% Yes 46% No

7. Do you think the inherent right of self-government for aboriginal peoples of Canada should include the creation of new rights to land (which the agreement decided on does not)?

37% Yes 45% No

8. Do you believe that the agreement overly weakens the federal government and gives too much power over to the provinces?

43% Yes 34% No

9. If you vote, on what basis will your vote be cast?

16% I've read it and agree  
22% I've read it and disagree  
2% I'll vote yes just to end the bickering  
8% I'll vote with my normal party choice  
11% I'll vote yes because I don't want Canada to split up  
11% Other - vote no  
11% Other - vote yes  
11% Other

Total of the above: 33% Yes 33% No