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## Meech lake threat

By ROBIN DANIALS

"When the government tells me not to worry, I worry," stated a French-speaking Canadian in reference to the 'distinct society' clause of the Meech Lake Accord (MLA).

He, along with more than one hundred concerned citizens, packed a public forum held at the Lord Beaverbrook Hotel Monday night. The forum dealt with the MLA and its implications for Canada's constitution.

Social issues such as minority rights and social problems (ie. day-care) formed the basis of the well-organized meeting; which was sponsored by the New Brunswick Ad-Hoc committee on the constitution.

The primary concern raised by Gayle MacDonald, chairperson for Ad-Hoc, was the "undemocratic process by which the Accord came about. Meech Lake is being presented

as an all or nothing matter. Citizens were not consulted, yet it will have definite and far-reaching implications for women, minorities and the disabled," she pointed out.

A second concern is that the Accord "does not guarantee minority rights."

MacDonald added, "Problems do not arise with Quebec being declared a 'distinct society,' however, the Accord does not give equality rights the same guarantee as it does language." We want to see the Charter of Rights, especially sections fifteen and twenty-eight put into the MLA to ensure there will be no risks."

"If you speak out against Meech Lake you are considered anti-Francophone or anti-Canadian, yet this is not true. If you speak out you are a concerned Canadian. Write your MLA, question your candidates, but act fast; any

strategy by citizens has been reactive, as the government has not given Canadians time to organize a proper lobby. The government has created a situation in which dissent was nearly impossible." Further, MacDonald stated that government is forcing people to accept the accord, not giving them a chance to react. "Why were sixteen weeks spent on free trade and only six weeks on Meech Lake?"

### Politicians comment

NDP candidate Shauna MacKenzie stated that while she agrees in principle with the Accord, "there are serious concerns particularly those safeguarding rights for women and minority groups."

Frank McKenna sided on behalf of the public. He believes "the public did not have a chance for input." The main problems, according to McKenna, are certain clauses



Gayle MacDonald spokesperson for New Brunswick ad hoc committee on the constitution.

which are "unclear. They need to be clarified."

The Hatfield Administration could not be reached for com-

ment. For a further, in depth review of the Meech Lake Accord, turn to the feature on page 18.



UNB's legendary Green Hornets swing into action. Nice one, boys!

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