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JOHN CROSBIE REPLIES TO CLYDE WELLS' CRITICISMS
OF THE MEECH LAKE ACCORD

OTTAWA - International Trade Minister John C. Crosbie replied to Premier Clyde Wells' position on the Meech Lake Accord in a speech to the Dartmouth Chamber of Commerce on October 25.

"Mr. Wells is a sincere man, but he is tragically misguided. He now has the power to wreck the best chance for national unity that this country has today, by defeating the Meech Lake Accord, and he says that he plans to use it," Mr. Crosbie said. "He should own up that he is placing at grave risk the unity of our country."

In reply to Mr. Wells' criticism that the Meech Lake Accord will block Senate reform, Mr. Crosbie said, "without the Meech Lake Accord, there will be virtually no chance for Senate reform, because there will be virtually no chance for constitutional reform."

Mr. Crosbie responded to Mr. Wells' charge that the distinct society clause would divide Canadians. "Recognizing Québec as a distinct society is only recognizing the reality that began with French settlement over 380 years ago. It is a reality that deserves to be recognized if we are to hope for a united Canada in the future," Mr. Crosbie said.

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Mr. Crosbie replied to Mr. Wells' claim that the Meech Lake Accord will keep Newfoundland a have-not province. "National shared-cost programs have been used in the past and should be used in the future to exercise national leadership in providing key social services for all Canadians wherever they may live," Mr. Crosbie said. The Meech Lake Accord confirms that national leadership role can continue and it does so without limiting our ability to redress regional disparities.

"Mr. Wells is wrong about the Meech Lake Accord. He is putting his biases, his own biases from the Trudeau years ahead of what he should recognize as the interests of his country and his province," Mr. Crosbie said. "It's time for Mr. Wells to join with the nation-builders, not play into the hands of the nation-wreckers."

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