MEECH LAKE COMPROMISE

Mulroney's decision wins friends and foes

by ROBERT RUSSO OTTAWA (CP) — Prime Minister Brian Mulroney won rare praise from a constitutional foe Thursday, but his decision to consider New Brunswick's plan to clear the Meech Lake impasse may have irritated Quebec.

Premier Clyde Wells, who introduced a motion to rescind Newfoundland's support of Meech Lake, praised Mulroney's decision to hold public hearings on New Brunswick's plan for a companion agreement.

"I think it's the first step to-wards flexibility and I welcome it.

Bourassa, who has worked closely with Mulroney to promote Meech Lake for three years, was less enthusiastic.

"I think we should wait to see the outcome of those public hearings," a dour Bourassa said during

a television interview.

The accord is designed to win Quebec's support for the 1981 constitutional agreement. It designates Quebec as a distinct society and gives all provinces more powers in such areas as judicial and Senate appointments.

During a nationally televised

speech, Mulroney said he would introduce New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna's proposal for a companion accord to Meech Lake in the House of Commons and submit the proposal to a parliamentary committee.

Bourassa was clearly annoyed by the prospect that Meech Lake's fu-ture could hinge on proposals from the three provinces who have not ratified Meech Lake.

"I cannot concentrate all my time (on) studying proposals.'

McKenna, whose idea for a

package of amendments to Meech Lake breathed new life into what discussions, was also buoyed by Mulroney's decision.

"Public participation will be required before any changes are made," said McKenna. "I think that in itself is a fantastic step forward."

While Wells supported the idea of a public discussion of McKenna's companion accord, he served notice he still rejects Meech Lake as is and he said he wants Mulroney and Bourassa to show more

"All we've gotten from them is 'No. Meech Lake as is."

Wells also played down the possibility that a so-called sunset clause might be a way to break the constitutional logjam. Such a clause would allow Meech Lake to be passed and expire after two or three years if changes weren't

"Frankly, I think it's a very difficult and cumbersome thing and I don't know if others would agree with it or not."

The premiers of Ontario, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island also voiced approval for Mul-roney's decision to invite Canadi-

ans to participate in the discussion via the parliamentary committee.

But two Western premiers, Alberta's Don Getty and British Columbia's Bill Vander Zalm, said Mulroney did not go far enough when it came to Senate reform.

"That's just not acceptable to me as a premier of British Columbia and as a westerner," said Vander Zalm.

I don't want to in any way detract from the initiative. But in my initial assessment, it in itself is positive but it will need more in the way of Senate reform.'

Vancouver homes least affordable

OTTAWA (CP) — Middle-income families in Toronto and Vancouver had to spend more than 60 per cent of their income last year on mortgages and other costs for an average bungalow, Royal Bank of Canada economists say.

And Vancouver vaulted ahead of

Toronto as the country's least affordable metropolitan area for first-time homebuyers in the final quarter of 1989, the bank said Thursday in a national survey on housing affordability.

"This marks the first time since 1986 that Toronto has been unseated from the top spot," said Michele Borque, a spokesman for the bank, Canada's largest mortgage lender. During the fourth quarter, aver-

age house prices in the Vancouver area reached \$212,000 while Toronto's average price declined to \$256,000 from a first-quarter peak of \$264,000.

This produced a jump in the Royal's affordability index for metropolitan Vancouver to 67 per cent in the fourth quarter compared to the Toronto region's 64 per cent.

The index measures the percentage of median pre-tax household income needed to service the cost

Gold price

TORONTO (CP) — Gold was quoted at \$460 bid Cdn (\$391 US) and \$461 asked Cdn (\$392 US) in mid-morning trading today by Deak International, a major gold and foreign exchange dealer.

OTTAWA (CP) — Food processors planning to build new plants are likely to move to the United States if they can't get lower-

priced farm products in Canada, a lobby group told the Commons ag-

In a brief to the committee, the

Grocery Products Manufacturers of

Canada said the cost of dairy,

poultry and vegetables produced

under marketing boards in Canada

could force companies to head

"These companies are anticipat-

ing major long-term decisions in the next 90 to 120 days that could

affect thousands of jobs and sever-al hundreds of millions of dollars in capital investment in Canada,"

the association said.
"The opportunities available to

OTTAWA (CP) - The United States air force will conduct a

cruise missile test over Canada on

Saturday, the Canadian Forces an-

It is the third U.S. cruise missile

The cigar-shaped AGM-129 cruise missile will remain attached to a U.S. B-52 bomber throughout

the flight over the Beaufort Sea,

down the Mackenzie River valley

and to the Primose Evaluation

test over Canada this year.

nounced today.

riculture committee Thursday.

south of the border.

MARKETING BOARDS BLAMED

of mortgage payments, property taxes and utilities on a detached bungalow. The calculations are based on a 25 per cent down payment and a 25-year mortgage at a five-year fixed rate.

A sudden surge in Vancouver prices and a slight drop in Toronto prices late last year accounted for the change, Borque explained.

The index for the Atlantic provinces averaged 40 per cent last year and improved during the last three quarters because of stable house prices and a slight decline in mortgage interest rates.

The average price for a bunga-low rose to \$101,000 at the start of 1989 but stayed flat the rest of the

The Quebec index remained stable at 45 per cent as the average price was \$111,000. Montreal, with an index of 48 per cent, is the most affordable of the country's three largest cities.

In Manitoba, the index improved to 42 per cent from 44 per cent in 1988 as prices dropped by three per cent to an average of \$101,500.

Last year's average house prices in Saskatchewan remained stable at \$88,000 and the index remained one of the lowest in the country at 39 per cent.

The average house price in Alberta reached \$113,000 by the fourth quarter of 1989 but the province still enjoys the country's

lowest index.
The average British Columbia price accelerated by as much as 30 per cent last year, hitting \$180,000 in the final quarter and bringing the index to 58 per cent.

RCMP REJECTS BRAIDS

SASKATOON (CP) - Native Indian RCMP officers will not be allowed to wear braids unless they can prove it's a religious requirement, an RCMP spokesman said

Thursday.

Exceptions to the force's dress code are granted only for religious reasons, Sgt. Pierre Belanger said in an interview from Ottawa.

An individual of any faith may apply to the RCMP com-missioner for a variance to the uniform, but the onus is on the member to prove it's a religious requirement, Be-

langer said.
"If it was determined to be a religious requirement, it would be allowed. But if it was only a tradition, it would be no," he said. No aboriginal member of

the force has sought permission to wear braids, he said.

Solicitor General Pierre Cadieux announced last week that Sikh Mounties will be able to wear the turban required by their religion if they have permission from the RCMP commissioner.

Some Indian leaders have called for the exemption to extend to braids for native officers. In Calgary, a native city policeman has asked his superiors for permission to wear braids.

a hit with students Trudeau

by MIKE TRICKEY Southam News

TORONTO — Yesterday's man was a smash hit with tomorrow's leaders when former prime minister Pierre Trudeau took his book promotion tour to a Toronto high school Thursday.
Wearing his trademark red rose

and standing in front of a massive Canadian flag, the 70-year-old Trudeau received repeated applause from 1,000 students from five downtown schools as he urged them to compare the values of the fathers of Confederation or his own generation of "yesterday's men" to the values of today's govern-

While cautioning the students that the book Towards a Just Society: the Trudeau Years, co-edited by Trudeau and Tom Axworthy, was not about the Meech Lake controversy, the former prime minister spent most of the hour-long question-and-answer period discussing the accord.

Repeating his arguments that Quebec will not be satisfied with the terms of Meech Lake and will instead continue to push for more, Trudeau compared the situation to the Baltic crisis facing the Soviet Union and asked how long the United States would tolerate secession talk from a state.

"In 1987, Quebec said we need five new things. Prime Minister (Brian) Mulroney gave them sev-en," he said of Quebec's bid to become a constitutional signator after refusing to the sign the 1982 pact negotiated during Trudeau's final term. "Premier (Robert) Bourassa will

ask for more. He said so Wednesday night, he's said it in the past."

With the familiar shrug of the shoulders and upraised palms, Trudeau said: "It is time to say to Quebec, 'Make up your mind.'" He warned that the biggest flaw

in the accord is that nobody knows what the distinct society clause "It's fooling the people to tell

them that if we sign Meech Lake, we'll have peace in our time." Trudeau professed to be confused

by the recent spate of Ontario communities declaring themselves unilingual English, but suggested Quebec brought on the episode by rejecting the Supreme Court decision on signs. sion on signs. "I guess the values we were

promoting have not been supported. There have always been people

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who hated our bilingual policies, but now we have given them a reason. And then Quebec stands up and says you don't like us any

Trudeau told the students he has

avoided national stage since his 1984 retirement because "I was more interested in international affairs than Canadian ones." And he denied the timing of his

book tour was designed to cause the government problems as it scrambles to find a solution to the Meech Lake impasse. "We're not riding to a shootout

with the Meech Lake gang."



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10 to 15 per cent more for poultry, marketing agencies. milk and vegetables than their U.S. counterparts do. In the United States, such farm

products are not controlled by marketing boards, which set prices and control production. The association said the differ-

ence in prices between the two countries is "significant when you consider that these regulated commodities account for about two-thirds of all ingredient costs and these ingredient costs make up approximately 50 per cent of the finished product cost.'

The government should order marketing boards to "adopt the goal of working toward competi-Canadians to supply the lucrative

Range near Canadian Forces Base Cold Lake, Alta.

The tests are carried out as part

of Canada's participation in the

western military alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Cruise missiles can hug the terrain in a low flight path, helping

them evade enemy radar. The United States tests some of its cruise

missiles in northern Canada be-

cause the terrain resembles that

found in parts of the Soviet Union.

Lower farm prices urged U.S. market are astounding. But tiveness in each link of the food only if we get our cost structures and quality in line with the U.S." chain," said the brief. It added that representatives of consumers, pro-The association said Canadian cessors and retailers should be apfood processors pay an average of pointed to the boards of the farm

> The association said Canadian farmers, who face higher costs than their U.S. counterparts, are not solely responsible for the price differences. But it said all parts of the food industry should work toward lower prices.

ANNOUNCEMENT

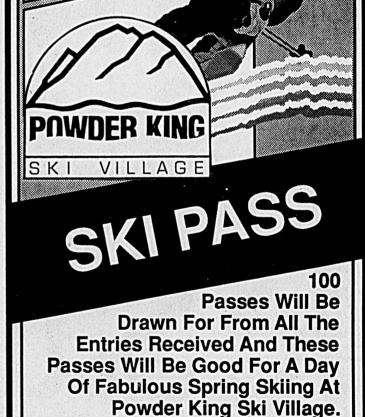


CARL C. WIKJORD

Leonard R. Zirnhelt, Managing Partner, is pleased to announce that Carl C. Wikjord, Trustee in Bankruptcy, has joined us as Senior Manager. Carl Wikjord has been active in the Insolvency field for several years in the Prince George area and the Northwest section of the province.

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