

MUGWUMP

By Aime Phillips

What a trauma.

Only three days left until the referendum. I was reading the Daily Gleaner the other day, and I noticed a number of university related personnel supporting the two sides of the referendum in paid advertisements.

I've come up with a nifty equation to help the rest of us with the big decision:

Add all the names you recognize from the Gleaner together, multiply by the total number of conferences, debates and talks you recall offhand (subtract all those attended), and then divide by the actual number of facts you know about the Charlottetown Accord. Equals: MASS CONFUSION.

Back to campus issues. One of the features editor's mentioned that the other day in the SUB cafeteria there was a student union organization actually charging students one dollar for the use of a chair. Apparently, they were doing some fundraising. Anyway, my source said that not only were they charging a buck for a chair, but they were also grabbing the chairs back once you were done with them! Now that I think about it, he must have been kidding me. The Student Union wouldn't possibly stoop that low.

Well, I was just talking with a SU secretary, and according to her students were paying a dollar each for one of those sports water bottle things, and she didn't know whether or not a chair came with that.

I went to the Media Bowl last Saturday. We won, of course. And despite what the poor losers at CHSR say, I think everyone had a good time. No blood was shed, no bones fractured. What more could you ask for? I even got my hands on the football twice.

I also managed to go to the Grad Class Meeting. For all those who didn't make it, I've got some bad news and some good news. We voted on the class project. In case you didn't realize that we were voting and are disappointed by that revelation- no need to worry! There's going to be another vote!

I remember last year there was a little trouble with the grad class project. Something about a path through the walkway up by D'Avery. Something else about a lot of people thinking that wasn't such a hot idea. Another something about a revote. Hmmm. Its nice to see that everything has been ironed from last year's complications....

As I've previously mentioned, this is mid term time, and obviously my stress management skills are being affected, leaving me with very little to say. Be sure to have a nice week, because next Friday the exam schedule is coming out!

OPINION

The opinions found in this column are not necessarily the views of the Brunswickan

The following are excerpts from a commentary by Matin Yaqzan, an assistant professor of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics. The full text can be purchased at the UNB Bookstore, \$0.50 for students.

REFERENDUM

IS IT MEANINGFUL?

All Canadians of voting age are being asked to decide whether the changes agreed upon by their representatives are desirable or not. It seems like a nice thing to do. But is it meaningful? Is it fair to expect that the vast majority of Canadians would have the time or the interest to make a serious study of the Constitution as it was in 1982, study the changes proposed in the Charlottetown Accord, consider the long term consequences of its legal implications, and arrive at a conclusion whether or not the Accord deserves a "yes" vote? If it took their representatives months and years of deliberations to make their judgement, how can they expect the other Canadians to pass a judgement in a few weeks or days? Is it reasonable to assume that 19 years old who are not considered competent enough to avoid AIDS, which can lead to their death, can be trusted as constitutional experts, just because a Constitution is liable to affect their future life? Is it reasonable to assume that the vast majority of the so called senior citizens would suddenly acquire expertise in constitution making? *Will the result of such a referendum be any better than tossing a coin?*

\$64,000 QUESTION

Suppose that all Canadians, including those in Quebec, vote in favour of the Charlottetown Accord on October 26, but within 2 to 4 years, a separatist government in Quebec conducts a referendum and with 51% support of the population in Quebec, demands separation. Will the government of Canada accede to such a demand? If so, then how does the problem of Quebec's separation depend upon the "Yes" or "No" vote of this referendum?

WHY "YES"?

The main reasons given for voting "yes" in the Referendum are that it has taken a long time for different parties to arrive at the Charlottetown Accord and if it is not approved, the likelihood of Quebec's separation will increase, and the consequent uncertainties might affect the money lenders' attitude towards Canada, which might have adverse economic consequences. That is certainly the concern of the big business. Also, people are tired of talking about the Constitution. As for any flaws in the Constitution, people should not worry about it, because as in the case of any business contract, one needs to compromise and not expect perfection.

WHY "NO"?

There are different groups that favour "No" for very different reasons. For example, the separatists in Quebec want no less than separation, and consider the "No" vote as a prelude to a "Yes" vote for separation, once they are in power in Quebec. Some Liberal Federalists in Quebec do not feel that Quebec has acquired adequate power under the accord to maintain its "distinct" character. Some English speaking groups feel that by considering Quebec as a "distinct" society, Canadians are being graded as citizens, which defies the concept of equality in a democracy. Some feel that the allocation of 25% seats in the House of Commons to Quebec and the double majority in the Senate, is undemocratic.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

A Constitution should not be treated as a business contract, and must be as close to being "perfect" as humanly possible. It should not be subject to constant revisions. A Constitution should not be made under duress or a threat of any kind. It should be made with the help of people with some insight, experience, knowledge and foresight, and above all, by people with character, and not only by politicians with personal interests at stake.

The Charlottetown Accord does give a promise of better future for the aboriginal peoples, if they are willing to accept the supreme authority of their colonizers and the end of their existence as independent "nations", with treaties with Canada. But it does not resolve the problem of possible separation of Quebec. *The Accord materially constitutes the sovereignty association as dreamed by late Mr. Rene Levesque, but apparently it does not pacify the present separatists, and therefore, it fails in that respect. The present Accord prepares Quebec for separation from the rest of Canada at some future date without any major upheaval within its own borders. If Quebec does not separate sometime in the near future, the Accord has unpleasant long term implications for Canada, when it could be faced with the problem of maintaining two "distinct" societies in every part of the country.*

SEPARATION CLAUSE!

If separation of a province from the federation is a realistic possibility, and the fact that Canada has been one "country" under the British crown for the last 125 years is immaterial or can be overlooked, then would it not be reasonable to introduce an appropriate clause in the Constitution outlining the prerequisites for the separation of any part of the federation, and the financial and other costs to the separating unit? Of course, such an option should be available to the aboriginal peoples as well.

SIGNIFICANCE OF A "NO" VOTE

Since most Quebecers, in particular, the separatists, are inclined to vote "No", a strong "No" vote in the rest of Canada will change the nature of significance the separatists would like to attach to their "No". The prime purpose of the constitutional debate was to assure the people in Quebec, but if a significant number of Quebecers are not satisfied with the Charlottetown Accord, the debate is not over yet.. It must continue, but it does not have to be carried out according to Mr. Bourassa's timetable, or Mr. Mulroney's. If the aboriginal peoples can be expected to wait for 5 years to learn what the "inherent right of self-government" would mean for them, Quebec should also be expected to wait until a rational and reasonable solution can be found, which should not take any more than 5 years!

PERSONAL PREFERENCE

Boycott the Referendum!