

Report from Ottawa

Turner's 'Canada Book' offered to help save the country

A few days after the Meech Lake Accord failed, I held a couple of Town Hall meetings - in Georgetown and Bolton.

They were not easy. The people who came were very divided. Some were sad for Canada because they thought Quebec separation was closer. Others were angry that Meech had ever been tried because it gave "too much" to Quebec. Others came to flaunt their anti-Quebec feelings and heap praise on the man who finally pulled the plug - Newfoundland premier Clyde Wells.

One man even brought a Newfoundland flag which he waved at the back of the room as I stood in front of a Canadian flag at the other end.

There was a lot of heckling and disorder and emotion.

Maybe, in hindsight, I should not have called those meetings. They sure didn't advance the cause of Canadian unity.

Over the summer, though, I asked people to think about the future of the country, and write me with their thoughts on what should come next. Several hundred did, and I have collected all their letters in a single binder, which I call my "Canada Book." It's there for me to look at when I need some refreshing on the issue.

Well, now the prime minister has called what amounts to a Town Hall meeting for the whole country; and it looks like something akin to the Halton-Peel Canada Book is going to be written by thousands more Canadians.

I was in the House of Commons last week when Mulroney announced the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future, and I liked what I heard.

Here is an informal collection of non-politicians who will travel Canada and talk to average people about how we nail this silly



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country back together again. It parallels another commission - this one a bit more formal - which this week starts travelling Quebec on the same topic. That commission will have a report written by the Spring - and it will likely make Meech Lake look like pablum in terms of the new demands Quebec will make to stay in Canada.

I have no doubts that we're on the verge of serious change.

Polls show that a majority of people in Quebec reject the idea of Canada as we have it now. They felt that when Meech died, "english" Canada was saying it didn't want Quebec brought back into the constitution. The whole affair played right into the hands of the separatists - Jacques Parizeau and Lucien Bouchard.

Where I sit in the House of Commons is directly across the floor from the nine members of the Bloc Quebecois. They are

dedicated to the breakup of Canada. Only one of them is legitimate, having been elected on a platform of separatism in a summer by-election. The others, including Bouchard, were elected as Tories or Liberals - members of federal parties who want to keep Canada as a single, federal state.

I don't enjoy sitting in the same chamber with people who are there to work for the end of Canada. And I don't like the polls which show Quebec independence is the preferred option in that province.

I wish the old Canada could stay. But, after Meech died and the separatists turned it to their favour, what are we going to do? If the Quebec commission on the future recommends a different structure for Canada - how do we respond?

Do we agree to Quebec's demands, or do we sent in the army? How are we going to respond to a province that suddenly tells us it is no longer subject to Canadian law?

That is what the Citizen's Forum is about. Unless we ask the questions, we won't find if there are any common answers. It won't be fun and it won't be without its own anger and emotion. It will probably stir up more anti-French and anti-English feelings. It will force us to think about a country on the verge of breaking up, just when much of the rest of the world is coming

together.

For example, as Europe moves towards common trade, common money and a common central bank, Canada is threatened with a new border between 20 million people on one side and six million on the other. In a world of globalization and competition, we are thinking about splitting our economy apart.

What kind of future will that bring?

Or is there some way of bridging these troubles - of keeping us all as Canadians. Can we get a new arrangements, coming from the people first and then being taken up into law?

The Citizens' Forum will try that. It'll be quirky and different - using meetings and satellites and church basements and TV debates. It's open to anybody in the country and will try to cobble together some kind of report by next Canada Day.

Of course, if there's no common ground, then it won't matter. The gulf between the "english" and the "french" will just keep growing. Canada will likely change more quickly.

So, I ask you again to think about the country.

I'm going to send my "Canada Book" to the head of the Citizens' Forum, Keith Spicer, and would like to have your thoughts included.

Send me a page on Canada: Garth Turner, MP, 27 Main St. S., Georgetown, Ont. L7G 3G2.

Volunteers needed to manage courts

TORONTO - Attorney General Howard Hampton is asking the public for volunteers to serve on special committees designed to help manage Ontario's new court system.

"Courts management advisory committees will bring together the people working in courts and the public to ensure the system effectively serves the people of Ontario," Mr. Hampton said.

Each of eight regional committees will be made up of two public representatives, two judges, a Crown attorney, two lawyers and a court administrator. These committees will deal with such issues as scheduling courtrooms and sittings, budgets and staffing.

One separate provincial committee will comprise four public representatives, four chief judges, four lawyers and four members of the Ministry of the Attorney General, including Mr. Hampton. This committee will deal with the administration of the overall system. Each committee will meet at least four

times a year.

The committees are being appointed as part of court reform which was implemented on September 1, 1990. Those changes created the Ontario Court of Justice with two divisions, the Ontario Court (General Division) and the Ontario Court (Provincial Division). Court Reform legislation also organized the court system into eight regions.

"We're not looking for people with legal training," Mr. Hampton said. "But we would like applicants to be committed to helping make the new justice system work by bringing local needs and concerns to committee meetings."

People interested in volunteering should send a letter outlining their qualifications to the Ministry of the Attorney General's Regional Director of Courts Administration in their area. Applicants should specify either the provincial or regional committee when they apply, and ensure the letter is received by Friday, November 16, 1990.

Marathon man



On Sunday, November 25, 1990, Mr. Keith Moore, a civilian member of the Halton Regional Force, will represent the Halton Regional Police Force in the Bangkok Half-Marathon.

The Half-Marathon is a 13-mile race through the streets of Bangkok, Thailand, sponsored by Thai Airways International Ltd.

Keith will be running in this marathon as a fund raising event for the Foster Parents Plan of Canada. Headquarters staff of the Halton Regional Police currently support a child in Guatemala, named Oscar, through the Foster Parents Plan of Canada.

The funds raised through sponsorships of Keith Moore's run will be donated to a school building program in Oscar's village.

Thai Airways International Ltd. has generously donated Keith's return flight to Bangkok.

Moore says that he is confident that he will be able to run the distance, but the change in climate from our local 5 degrees celsius to Thailand's 30 degrees celsius and 80% humidity will make the race harder. Keith will arrive in Bangkok on Friday, November 23, 1990, and therefore will have only one day to acclimatize to the conditions.

Pictured above, left to right, Keith Moore, Halton Region Police Chief W.I. Harding and David Martin, a representative of Thai Airways.

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