COMMUNIQUÉ

BUSINESS COUNCIL ON NATIONAL ISSUES · CONSEIL CANADIEN DES CHEFS D'ENTREPRISES

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CONSTITUTIONAL OPTIONS PAPER RELEASED BY BUSINESS COUNCIL ON NATIONAL ISSUES

The Business Council on National Issues released in Ottawa today a paper entitled Canada's Constitutional Options. Prepared by Professor Ronald L. Watts, Director of the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations at Queen's University, the paper is the first initiative of a major project launched in August on the Business Council's behalf by Professor Watts and a team of economists, political scientists, lawyers, and constitutional scholars drawn from Queen's University and other parts of Canada.

In tabling the paper, the Council's Chairman, J. Edward Newall, and the Council's President and Chief Executive Officer, Thomas P. d'Aquino, stated that the "Council's principal objectives in undertaking the six month project are to examine from a private sector perspective viable constitutional options open to Canadians". "While a full range of options will be considered" they said, "a more effective federalism politically, and an enhanced Canadian common market economically, are the Council's underlying goals in undertaking this initiative."

The various constitutional options outlined in the paper tabled today provide the framework for some twelve individual studies currently being prepared by Professor Watts and his team. The results of the studies will be tabled at a symposium for Business Council members in Toronto on January 16, 1991. The Council's special project on Canada's constitutional options is directed by Mr. d'Aquino, and the Council's Politics and Government Group, which is overseeing the initiative, is chaired by William W. Stinson, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Pacific Limited.

Mr. d'Aquino stressed the importance of a rational and prudent resolution of Canada's constitutional differences. "Achieving a broadly-based consensus on how we are to be governed," he said, "is imperative, not only to our political life as a nation, but to our economic life as well. The ability of Canadians to look outwards and to respond to urgent and challenging opportunities globally will be made infinitely easier if our political house is in order."

The Business Council on National Issues is the senior voice of Canadian business on policy issues in Canada and abroad. Composed of 150 chief executives of Canada's leading companies, the Council's member companies employ some 1.5 million Canadians and administer in excess of $975 billion in assets.

A non-partisan group committed to an active program of research, consultation, and advocacy on economic and non-economic issues, the Council's priorities are: to strengthen Canada's national economy; to ensure that Canada continues to play a leading role among the industrialized nations; to support progressive social and environmental policies; and to foster healthy political institutions.

The Council has a long-standing involvement in constitutional issues. It contributed actively to the debate in the early 1980s leading up to the Constitution Act, and again during the recent deliberations on the Meech Lake Accord.

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Reference: Heidi Hutchings
Telephone (613) 238-3727
Facsimile (613) 236-8679