



Portfolio Manager Commentary - September 30, 2022

Global Markets Review

After a relief rally from mid-July to mid-August, global equity markets gave up all gains and finished the third quarter with negative returns. Both equity and bond markets continued to suffer from decade-high inflation and central banks' aggressive monetary tightening. Volatility remained high across all major asset classes, while the recessionary risk has been rising as well. For the three-month period ended September 30, 2022, the MSCI World Index fell by 6.1%. Consumer Discretionary was the only sector that registered positive returns (+0.3%), while Communication Services was the bottom-performing sector (-12.9%). In North America, the S&P 500 dropped by 4.9% with Consumer Discretionary also the best-performing sector. The S&P/TSX Composite lost 1.4%, boosted by Industrials. In Europe, the STOXX 600 was down 4.2% for the third quarter of this year. Major European indices also registered negative returns. Italy' FTSE MIB was the best-performing index (-2.5%). France CAC 40 and the U.K. FTSE 100 were down by 2.5% and 2.8%, respectively. Switzerland, Germany, and Spain lost 4.3%, 5.2%, and 8.3%, respectively.

Inflation has remained stubbornly high, which continues to challenge global economic growth. Energy prices have come down from the peak. Meanwhile, global supply chain disruptions continued easing. However, ripples from geopolitical tensions between Russia and Ukraine still linger. While a variety of key economic measures remained sound during the third quarter, deterioration in other data suggested an economic slowdown. August CPI pointed at 8.3%, a further deceleration from the peak in June, but this elevated inflation level would be unlikely to slow the pace of further aggressive monetary tightening. Rising inflation is eroding real wage growth, while unemployment rates continue to see sequential decline to pre-pandemic lows. Manufacturing PMI entered September at 50.9, which has largely trended down since its peak in March 2021. Bond market also sold off during the quarter. The U.S. Treasury market kept rising sharply in response to the inflation overshoot and monetary tightening, while the 2-year and 10-year Treasury spread remained in below-zero territory during the quarter. During the last few days of September, the newly formed U.K. government announced a fiscal package including a tax cut program that raised concerns of adding inflationary pressure to the economy. As a result, the budgetary announcement accelerated the market sell-off, sending GBP to an all-time low versus USD and the gilt yields surged accordingly. With most equity markets falling in Q3, Consumer Discretionary and Consumer Staples showed relative resilience thanks to strong consumer spending and still-low unemployment. Meanwhile, Energy stocks were boosted by solid Q2 results and strength in natural gas prices but were offset by weak oil prices during the quarter. Rate-sensitive sectors such as Real Estate generally underperformed amid the high interest rate environment.

Central banks in developed economies continued to deliver more hawkish stances of their monetary policy to combat inflationary risks. This quarter witnessed two consecutive 75-basis-point interest rate hikes—at the July and September Federal Open Market Committee (“FOMC”) meetings—to the 3.00%-3.25% range. As the Fed reaffirmed its commitment to fighting inflation, the Fed funds futures market is pricing in another 140 basis points of tightening by year-end. This includes another two possible 0.75% hikes at both November and December meetings. Along with rate increases, the Committee also confirmed the full speed of balance sheet reduction at a pace of \$95 billion a month starting from September.

The Bank of Canada (BoC) delivered even more aggressive policy stances to tame inflation by raising its policy rate by 100 at the July meeting and 75 basis points at the September meeting. This sent Canada's overnight policy rate to 3.25%, bringing the cumulative hikes so far this year to 300 basis points, the fastest tightening pace since the mid-1990s. The statement communicated that “the policy rate will need to rise further”. Higher interest rates will test Canadian households' ability to service their debts, as the housing market extended its cooldown during the third quarter.

The European Central Bank (ECB) started raising its benchmark interest rate during the quarter: 50 basis points in July, followed by 75 basis points in September. With the current benchmark interest rate at 1.25%, the ECB President Lagarde signaled that policy rates remain far below levels that ensure the return of 2% inflation. Given a deteriorating inflation picture in Europe, including rising wage growth and hefty energy prices, further rate hikes over the next several meetings should be expected to slow demand and curtail persistent inflationary pressure. Meanwhile, the Bank of England (BoE) voted to lift the policy rate by two consecutive 50 basis points hikes in August and September to 2.25%. However, the newly announced fiscal measure including a large amount of tax cuts drew global criticism, leading to a historic U.K. gilt and British pound sell-off. The BoE was forced to postpone the planned commencement of its gilt selling and begin temporary purchases of long-dated bonds in order to calm the market turbulence. Rating

agencies Fitch and Standard & Poor's downgraded the outlook for the country's credit rating to reflect their lower confidence in the U.K. financial market and the policy framework.

Visibility on inflation outlook is low. Some evidence suggests that components of CPI have shown signs of decline in the U.S. at the end of Q3. Food, housing, and transportation account for the largest portion of the recent CPI spike. Lower oil prices during the three-month period have pulled transportation costs lower. Falling grain prices from the peak should also bode well for a cooldown in food CPI component. However, Shelter inflation could remain higher and longer, as rent increases have been accelerating, especially on existing leases. In Europe, energy costs continued to be the top contributor to inflation. Nord Stream 1, whose gas supply capacity accounts for over 10% of European demand and over 50% of Germany's demand, was shut down for maintenance in July. It came onstream temporarily before Russia closed it again after several leaks were found. This put further pressure on the power generator. Countries such as Spain and Portugal were forced to cut VAT rate on electricity bills to tackle soaring energy prices. In short, inflationary pressure and associated geopolitical tensions are more problematic in Europe than North America.

Looking forward to the rest of 2022, the global economic slowdown should persist, and broad markets should continue to experience high volatility until a less-aggressive Fed pivot occurs. There are early signs of peak inflation, but this is not sufficient to stop global monetary tightening. Rising inflation has weighed on corporate margins and earnings growth. With still-high inflation, aggressive monetary tightening, and unresolved geopolitical tensions, we expect a further multiple compression across all sectors after the Q3 earnings season, but valuations of some companies are at levels that are historically attractive. Therefore, in response to the ongoing market turbulence, we are positioning our portfolios tilted towards more defensive names. We continue to favor high quality companies that demonstrate low sensitivity to rate hike cycle, sustainable earnings growth, and reasonable valuations. Regarding country exposure, we still favor U.S. and Canada over Europe, with mounting risks for European households and business tied to more severe inflationary pressure and geopolitical tensions. To take advantage of market volatility and cushion against further market decline, we have also increased our call options overwrite levels.

Portfolio Review

Brompton Split Banc Corp. (the "Fund") invests in a portfolio consisting primarily of the six largest Canadian banks as well as up to 10% of the portfolio can be invested, from time to time, in global financial companies through an investment in the Brompton North American Financials ETF ("BFIN"). BFIN is an exchange-traded fund that invests in the equity securities of North American financial services companies with a market capitalization of at least \$5 billion.

In the third quarter of 2022, the Fund fell 1.6% versus the S&P/TSX Financials Index, down 1.2%, and the S&P/TSX Banks Index, which was down 4.8%. While Canadian banks registered negative returns like many other sectors as recession fears rose during the 3-month period, the fundamentals of the group remain resilient. We are still holding a long-term positive outlook for Canadian banks. However, given the mixed economic backdrop and more cautious management commentary, the group would continue to experience near-term headwinds in this aggressive monetary tightening cycle. Benefits of central bank rate hike largely boosted the Q3 spread revenue growth. TD was one of the biggest beneficiaries, as its spread revenue account for roughly 60% of overall revenue. Loan growth remained solid, driven by personal and commercial banking, both domestic and abroad. However, overall revenue was dragged down by capital market segments, due to muted client activities (M&A and leverage financing). As a result, earnings were a mixed bag, as trading revenues and credit performance drove the differences. Even though credit remained a tailwind during Q3, rate hikes, housing slowdown, and energy costs will blur the outlook on banks' profitability. Amid uncertain economic outlook, all large banks built modest performing reserves in Q3. This indicates a more negative outlook, and we expect reserve builds to gradually accumulate into Q4. Canadian banks are well capitalized, with CET-1 ratios largely flat quarter over quarter and well above the regulatory requirement of 10.5%.

Valuations for the large Canadian banks have become more attractive on the back of market selloff, with P/B and forward P/E multiples trading further below historical averages since 2010. Compared to the U.S. banks, the Canadian counterpart has performed better year to date. We believe valuations are appealing for long-term investors, even though we are more cautious in the near term, as recession fears combined with concerns on Canadian housing market could continue driving volatility higher within the sector.

The Fund was negatively affected by its holdings in BFIN, which was down 1.5% during the 3-month period. BFIN's performance was dragged by all sub-industry groups except for Investment Banking & Brokerage, as well as Data Processing & Outsourced Services.

| Annual Compound Returns ¹ | YTD | 1-YR | 3-YR | 5-YR | 10-YR | Since Inception ² |
|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|------|------|-------|------------------------------|
| Brompton Split Banc Corp. - Class A | (25.6%) | (15.5%) | 7.8% | 7.1% | 13.5% | 10.3% |
| Brompton Split Banc Corp. - Preferred | 3.8% | 5.1% | 5.1% | 5.1% | 4.8% | 5.0% |
| Brompton Split Banc Corp. - Unit | (15.6%) | (7.8%) | 6.5% | 6.2% | 9.6% | 7.9% |

⁽¹⁾ Returns are for the periods ended September 30, 2022 and are unaudited. The table shows the past performance of the Fund. Past performance does not necessarily indicate how the Fund will perform in the future. The information shown is based on Net Asset Value per Class A share and per unit, or the redemption price per Preferred share and assumes that distributions made by the Fund on the Class A shares, Preferred shares and units in the periods shown were reinvested (at Net Asset Value per Class A share and per unit, or the redemption price per Preferred share) in additional Class A shares, units and Preferred shares of the Fund.

⁽²⁾ Inception Date November 16, 2005.

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You will usually pay brokerage fees to your dealer if you purchase or sell shares of the Fund on the Toronto Stock Exchange or other alternative Canadian trading system (an "exchange"). If the shares are purchased or sold on an exchange, investors may pay more than the current net asset value when buying shares of the investment fund and may receive less than the current net asset value when selling them.

There are ongoing fees and expenses associated with owning shares of an investment fund. An investment fund must prepare disclosure documents that contain key information about the Fund. You can find more detailed information about the Fund in the public filings available at www.sedar.com. The indicated rates of return are the historical annual compounded total returns including changes in share value and reinvestment of all distributions and do not take into account certain fees such as redemption costs or income taxes payable by any securityholder that would have reduced returns. Investment funds are not guaranteed, their values change frequently and past performance may not be repeated.

Certain statements contained in this document constitute forward-looking information within the meaning of Canadian securities laws. Forward-looking information may relate to matters disclosed in this document and to other matters identified in public filings relating to the Fund, to the future outlook of the Fund and anticipated events or results and may include statements regarding the future financial performance of the Fund. In some cases, forward-looking information can be identified by terms such as "may", "will", "should", "expect", "plan", "anticipate", "believe", "intend", "estimate", "predict", "potential", "continue" or other similar expressions concerning matters that are not historical facts. Actual results may vary from such forward-looking information. Investors should not place undue reliance on forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements are made as of the date hereof and we assume no obligation to update or revise them to reflect new events or circumstances.



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