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CANADIAN CONFERENCE of CATHOLIC
BISHOPS

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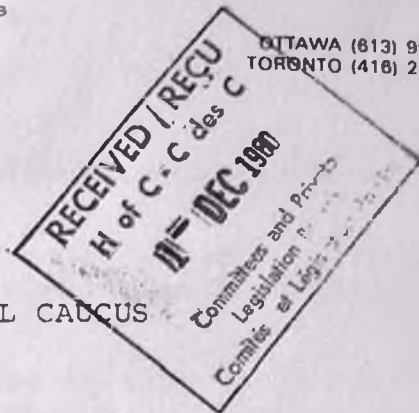
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Reçu le 28/11/80



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

URSULA APPOLLONI, M.P.
YORK SOUTH-WESTON

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE
MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE



M E M O R A N D U M

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE ONTARIO LIBERAL CAUCUS

FROM: MRS. URSULA APPOLLONI, M.P.

DATE: NOVEMBER 27, 1980

C O N F I D E N T I A L

At this week's Ontario Caucus, I was unfortunately not able to present the case of the Catholic community as it deserved. I would, however, like you to consider that their concerns go very much deeper than may have been apparent from my short intervention.

Attached is a copy of the editorial by Larry Henderson, Editor of the Catholic Register. I have subsequently discovered that the Catholic community has indeed accepted his invitation to "defend their rights" inasmuch as next week's edition is going to include more articles and several letters to the Editor.

I have also discovered that the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has requested permission to appear before the committee and in the meanwhile, has retained Counsel to help them prepare their brief.

Essentially, legal experts are concerned that Catholic schools, hospitals and child care institutions may be in jeopardy as a result of the proposed Charter of Rights and they do not feel that Article 24 of the Constitution will help prevent the abuses they fear. For instance, it could be argued that the Catholic institutions' requirements that staff be of the Catholic faith and conform to the lifestyle consonant with Catholic morals could be a denial of freedom of conscience pursuant to Section 2 of the proposed Charter.

There is considerable fear that at some future date courts may require Catholic institutions to alter hiring practices so as not to discriminate against non-Catholics. If this were to take place, it

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Memo to All Members of
Ontario Liberal Caucus

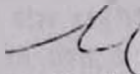
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November 27, 1980

would obviously make a mockery of the inherent catholicity of schools and hospitals.

I might point out that the catholicity of schools and other institutions has already been seriously challenged both in British Columbia and Ontario.

My chief concern in this whole debate is that we do not repeat the scenario of the Omnibus Bill when many Liberals voted in good faith without realizing the enormous consequences of the liberalization of the abortion laws.


U.A.

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Catholics must defend rights

We live in an era which is highly sensitive to human rights. We are concerned with the rights of racial minorities, the poor, women, children and the unborn. And so we should be.

But are we equally concerned about Catholic rights? To date there has been no special submission on behalf of the Catholic Bishops to the Parliamentary Committee on the Constitution, setting forth Catholic concerns.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Jewish Congress, and a hundred other groups have made lengthy submissions voicing concern over the proposed new Bill of Rights and its possible effect on the rights enjoyed by ethnic and religious groups in this country. But so far as we are aware, the Catholic Women's League has the honor of being the only Catholic organization represented.

The proposed new Bill of Rights may, if passed, abolish:

- Denominational schools,
- Provincial or regional censorship,
- All restrictions on abortion, sterilization or euthanasia.

It may become impossible to advertise for Catholic employees, to hire Catholic school teachers or to fire teachers who do not uphold Catholic theology or morals.

We have all seen the unfortunate publicity caused by the case of Mrs. Anne Sinton, who was fired by the Waterloo Separate School Board because she married a divorced man. No one wants to see a teacher subjected to discrimination. The question is, however: does a Catholic School have the right to conduct its affairs according to Catholic principles, or does it not?

Society is ambivalent about this at present. And, unless Catholics generally are prepared to speak up and defend their rights, these rights will be taken away by courts of law which have no comprehension of what it means to be Catholic.

To date, 101 groups or individuals have requested the right to appear before the Parliamentary committee on the Constitution, but the committee has only until December 9 to report. We urge responsible Catholic organizations to act without delay.