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CANADIAN SLOVAK LEAGUE

(INCORPORATED BY SPECIAL ACT OF PARLIAMENT IN OTTAWA IN 1934.
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Copy to Des. '80

December 1, 1980.

Committee of Constitution of Canada,
Room 200, West Block,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dir Sirs:

Re: The Canadian Constitution

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2 DEC 1980
Committees and Private
Legislation Branch
Comités et Législation Privée

B R I E F

TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA

By the CANADIAN SLOVAK LEAGUE

The Canadian Slovak League wishes to express its concern that the proposed Constitution of Canada does not anywhere refer to multiculturalism as an integral part of the Canadian identity.

Indeed the Canadian Slovak League is concerned that the present process still leaves the Constitution very much a law of England.

The Canadian Slovak League believes that the constitution of Canada should be made by the people who form the political community of Canada.

Therefore the process should be re-examined to determine a method whereby the Parliament of Canada / and the provincial legislatures/ plays some more visible role in the enactment of Canada's constitution.

At present there is opportunity to dissent to

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what is being done, but there is no opportunity for the country to come together during the process.

It would have been wiser simply to have all legislative power vested in the Parliament of Canada and the provincial legislatures by the United Kingdom Parliament and to have left the matter of a Charter of Rights to further discussion with the provinces.

If the process is to proceed, then the Canadian Slovak League is concerned that the Constitution state the laws of Canada must respect cultural diversity and provide for the right of every citizen, regardless of ethnic origin, to equal opportunity.

It is a matter of importance to us that the policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework, be entrenched in the Constitution, and that every ethnic community in Canada should be able to enjoy support in preserving its own cultural heritage and in discovering and appreciating those of other communities.

The Canadian Slovak League believes the present provisions providing for Canadians' freedom of movement, of property ownership and of job opportunities throughout Canada are long overdue. The Canadian Slovak League however is concerned with the insertion in these matters, including the general rights, of clauses providing for exemptions which could provide for opportunity to abuse the very rights purported to be given.

We are also concerned that while minority language rights are afforded where a person's first language is English or French, such rights are not extended to Canadians

whose first language may not have been English or French but who lived in predominantly anglophone or francophone communities at the relevant time.

The Canadian Slovak League believes that a constitution should be such a nature as to bring Canadian together.

Considering the very many criticisms already expressed it is our hope the mandate of the Committee will be extended to provide more time to consider the ramifications of what has been said.

And when all is said done, the Constitution of Canada should be held in esteem and pride by its citizens. There is just too much criticism extant for the present proposal to proceed any farther without amendment.

Yours very sincerely,



Imrich Stolarik,
Supreme President.