

This is a report on the CANADIAN CONSTITUTION by an ad hoc Committee of Msgr. Roy M. McDonald Assembly Knights of Columbus.

We were guided in our discussion by the research study prepared by the committee on the constitution for the Canadian Bar Association. Our study and comments are limited to a number of items:

In Chapter 4 of the text the discussion was mainly on the protection of Civil Rights. Under this heading we note:

"The charter should also provide that every individual in Canada is entitled not to be discriminated against by reason of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, religion or sex."

(a) We feel that references to handicapped should be included in any rights of non-discrimination.

We base our view on the inability of the handicapped persons to develop their potential as Canadians. There appears to be, at present, an apathetic attitude in the federal and provincial governments to protect the basic needs and rights of these individuals. In effect this is tantamount to being discrimination against these Canadians.

In large centers, social clubs try to fulfill their needs, but in small communities, the handicapped individuals are helpless.

(b) Non-discrimination because of age should also be included in a charter of rights. For example, children have a right to education as Canadians. Every child should have access to kindergarten in the very formative and educative years of their lives. Equality of opportunity and public services should be available to all individuals and regions in Canada.

The aged, as members of Canadian society have the right to self-dignity, self-respect, and a recognition and a right to minimum standard of well being after their productive years.

(c) On the language rights, the constitution should guarantee certain minimal rights to both English and French Canadians throughout Canada.

For example, governmental institutions such as hospitals, homes for the aged, should be bilingual so as not to cause any hardship on the individual.

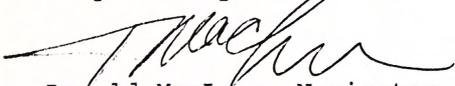
Further education in the official language of their choice should also be considered a right of every Canadian.

We agree and support the statement of the report (chapter 5, page 26):

"Finally, of course, the provision, in our proposed Bill of Rights respecting equality before the law, should go some ways towards underlining the commitment of all Canadians to fair treatment for all people in Canada."

As a group, we wish to acknowledge the positive contribution of the Canadian Bar Association to Canadian Unity and hope that the Association's commitment towards a new constitution that will meet the aspirations and the present day needs of all the people of Canada.

Respectfully submitted,



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