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The National Council Jewish Women of Canada welcomes the opportunity to thank the members of the task force for their efforts on behalf of Canada and wishes the task force successful completion of its responsibilities.

Purpose of the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada

CNFS

The NCJW of Canada is a voluntary organization which, in the spirit of Judaism, is dedicated to furthering human welfare in the Jewish and general communities, locally, nationally, and internationally. Through an integrated programme of education, community service and social action, NCJW of Canada provides essential services and stimulates and educates the individual and the community.

Background

At the 19th biennial convention of NCJW held in Toronto May 29th - June 2nd, 1977, the following Position on Canadian Unity was adopted unanimously: "The NCJW of Canada commits itself to the existence of a strong united Canada, one in which people of all origins will feel at home in all parts of the country, and further, that it will give its support to programmes which would carry out this commitment."

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The major programme thrust of our organization during the past year has been a programme known as CITIZEN IMPACT. The goal of this programme is to develop new ways for our members to become more meaningfully involved as citizens, in our community life.

B

The issue of Canadian unity was selected as the topic for a Citizens Impact Institute which was held in Ottawa November 20th - 22nd, 1977. Representatives of our organization from Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, London, Hamilton, Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal participated in the institute which marked the beginning of the "involvement" process of gaining information, identifying issues, setting priorities and planning and taking action. The institute also provided an opportunity for our members from Eastern and Western Canada to share face-to-face their concerns about the future of Canada with their fellow members and with members of Parliament.

Following the institute, the issues identified were circulated to the sections for additional comments, additions or deletions from the perspective of their communities. Our submission reflects the ideas, concerns and feelings of our members across Canada.

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN OF CANADA

NATIONAL OFFICE: 300A WILSON AVENUE, SUITE 2 - DOWNSVIEW, ONTARIO M3H 1S7

(416) 633-1251

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Winnipeg

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PRESIDENT  
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Toronto

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Edmonton

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Toronto

SUBMISSION TO

THE TASK FORCE ON NATIONAL UNITY

FROM

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN

March 8, 1978

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The National Council of Jewish Women has always been concerned with human rights. That is why we support the entrenchment of human rights in a Canadian constitution. This would make it impossible for any government, either federal or provincial, to legislate to diminish these rights once they were guaranteed in the constitution. We consider language rights to be human rights.

We recognize the cultural diversity of Canada, and we support the concept of a multicultural country. But given this umbrella of multiculturalism, we would like to express our support for the entrenchment of the two official languages, both English and French, in the Canadian constitution. We support institutional bilingualism at both the federal and provincial levels. At present, this occurs in areas of federal jurisdiction because of the Official Languages Act, (and, the province of New Brunswick is officially bilingual). We would like to see this extended to other provinces so that, wherever possible and practical, services could be provided in both English and French not only in the educational sphere, but also in health facilities, in the courts and in other provincial institutions.

We would like to express our concern about the extent to which regional economic disparities, and economic problems generally - unemployment and inflation - are factors contributing to Canadian disunity. Any solution to the problem of Canadian unity will have to recognize regional economic disparities, and deal with them in a concrete manner.

We would like to discuss with you some of the difficulties involved in taking positions on this issue of national unity that fairly represent the points of view held by our members from across the country. As was noted, we had an opportunity in the last few months to meet, to learn from each other, to discuss, and to come to some conclusions on matters related to national unity. And what we discovered during our meetings in November within our own group represents, we think, the problem of Canada itself.

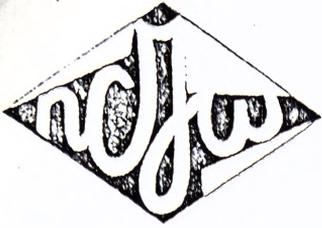
We have always considered ourselves to be a rather homogeneous group - after all to the outsider we appear to have a common cause - which we do - and we look like, and I suppose we are - a group of middle class Jewish women/endeavouring to participate not only in the Jewish community but in the entire Canadian community. And what we discovered in November was that, on the issue of Canadian unity, we all held different points of view depending on our regional biases. Some of our western members, even some of our Ontario members did not understand why French had to have equality of status with English across the country. All of our members were upset about the downgrading of the English language in Quebec and sympathized with the plight of our Montreal members. Our Montreal members tried to show that the question of English rights in Quebec was related to the issue of French rights in the other provinces. It was not only their problem. It was a Canadian problem. We were united in one thing only - it was a feeling that Canada's survival was very important to all of us. As Jews,

as people who have immigrant backgrounds, whether recent or several generations ago, we have benefitted by living in this country and we have contributed to it. We have a deep committment to its continued existence. We therefore want to take part in working out its future directions.

And it was because of this deeply held feeling that Canada must stay together that our members from across the country were able to reach some sort of accommodation, and come to a broad consensus on at least one issue - the language issue.

The key was communication. And that is why we believe so strongly in the value of travel at low cost, in the value of interpersonal meetings between citizens from across the country, and in the importance of a media that objectively presents issues across the country. (As a matter of fact we are organizing a media review to see whether the same issues are reported differently across the country.)

We would like to thank you for this opportunity to communicate with the members of the task force and with other national groups appearing here today. Only through communication with each other will we be able to achieve the understanding necessary to keep this country together.



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**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN OF CANADA**  
**LE CONSEIL NATIONAL DES FEMMES JUIVES DU CANADA**  
1111 FINCH AVE. W., SUITE 401, DOWNSVIEW, ONTARIO M3J 2E5 (416) 633-1251

July 15, 1980.

**PRESIDENT**  
Helen Marr  
Toronto

**HONORARY PRESIDENT**  
Lucille Lorie  
Toronto

**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**  
Marjorie Blankstein  
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Toronto

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Florence Greenberg  
Toronto

**TO:** Members of Parliament  
Ottawa, Ontario.

**FROM:** Helen Marr,  
National President.

A

We are pleased to enclose a copy of the Aide-Memoire, which was previously circulated to Members of Parliament in December, 1977.

Because there have been two changes of Government since that date, and because this Aide-Memoire is still relevant, we feel that it will be useful to you, as an M.P., representing your constituents.

At our Annual Meeting in May, 1980, National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, a national organization of 4,000 members across the country, reaffirmed our commitment to a united Canada, and undertook to study Constitutional Reform and Federalism.

We plan to keep Government informed as to the progress of this undertaking.

HM/rb