



SPARC of B.C.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE..

**Social Planning and Review Council of B.C.**

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SPARC Panel on Handicapped

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CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS IGNORE THE YEAR OF THE DISABLED

Walter Paetkau, President of SPARC of B.C., today expressed dismay that the amendments to the proposed Constitution introduced by the Hon. Jean Chretien again do not include human rights for disabled persons! This is of particular disappointment since 1981 is the International Year of Disabled Persons, and Canada is on record as being committed to the Year's theme of "Full Participation and Equality". In addition, Canada's own House of Commons Special Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped advocated for this inclusion, as did Mr. Gordon Fairweather, Chief Commissioner, Canadian Human Rights Commission, in his presentation to the Special Joint Committee on the Constitution of Canada.

SPARC's concern is for all citizens; thus amendments must enlarge protection for everyone, regardless of membership in any class or category. It is SPARC's position that once particular groups are mentioned, it becomes inappropriate to exclude any one group. It would be preferable not to have substantive or exhaustive lists of constituencies; however, since the government in its wisdom has decided that groups such as women, natives, etc. ought to be identified, it is SPARC's contention that physical and mental condition be included in the Constitution's entrenchment of human rights.