

THE NEW CONSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT

THE HIGHLIGHTS

Over the past two years, federal, provincial and Aboriginal leaders have consulted with thousands of Canadians and special interest groups from coast to coast. These consultations included Royal Commissions, participatory conferences, parliamentary hearings, and hearings in the provinces and territories held by provincial and territorial legislatures. Federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal leaders have agreed unanimously on a package of constitutional proposals that recognizes the equality of all Canadians and represents all of our interests. The agreement is now before Canadians.

A Social and Economic Union

The agreement proposes that the new Constitution would contain a statement of key economic and social objectives shared by all of the governments in the federation. The objectives include comprehensive, universal, portable, accessible and publicly administered health care, adequate social services and benefits, high quality primary and secondary education and reasonable access to post-secondary education, collective bargaining rights and a commitment to protecting the environment. The economic policy objectives to be entrenched would be aimed at strengthening the Canadian economic union; the free movement of persons, goods, services, and capital; ensuring full employment and a reasonable standard of living for all Canadians; ensuring sustainable and equitable development.

Avoiding Overlap and Duplication

Exclusive provincial jurisdiction would be recognized in the areas of forestry, mining, tourism, housing, recreation, municipal affairs, cultural matters within the province, and labour market development and training. In addition, to ensure the two levels of government work in harmony, the government of Canada commits to negotiate agreements with the provinces in areas such as immigration, regional development and telecommunications. Federal-provincial agreements on any subject could be protected by the Constitution from unilateral change.

Distinct Society

As was the case in the Meech Lake agreement, the new Canadian Constitution

would recognize the distinct nature of Quebec, based on its French language, unique culture and civil law tradition.

Parliamentary Reform

In the reformed Parliament, the Senate would reflect the equality of the provinces while the House of Commons would be based more on the principle of representation by population. As well, Quebec would be assured a minimum 25% of the seats in the House of Commons. The proposed Senate would be made up of six elected senators from each province and one from each territory. Additional seats would provide representation for Aboriginal peoples. The reform Senate's powers should significantly increase the role of the elected Senators in the policy process.

The proposals recognize that Aboriginal peoples have an inherent right to self-government and that the Constitution should enable them to develop self-government arrangements and to take their place in the Canadian federation. The proposals recognize Aboriginal governments as one of the three constitutionally recognized orders of government in Canada. In addition, the proposals provide for a negotiation process between Aboriginal leaders and provincial and federal governments to put this right into effect. The recognition of the inherent right would not create any new rights to land.

Aboriginal Self-Government

Now that Canada's federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal leaders have reached a consensus, it is the right of all Canadians to understand the new proposals. Call the toll free number below to receive an easy-to-read booklet on the new constitutional agreement or a complete text.

It's your right to know what the constitutional proposals say, before voting on October 26.

**FOR INFORMATION CALL:
1-800-561-1188**

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