

*Constitution Act, 1867*

still ring true. When one thinks of a national capital, the image goes far beyond that of any other well-designed functioning urban settlement. The words "seat of Government", and "national repository of arts", and "centre of national culture" begin to express these ideas. The capital of any nation is a very special city which symbolizes in one entity the expression of that nation and its people as a whole. Ideally, this is accomplished through its special functions as well as its physical form and make-up which serve as a reflection of the social and cultural diversity and characteristics of the inhabitants of the nation. The capital city is a place to experience many facets of the nation at firsthand, to learn of its history and its future potential. The capital is the place to become truly one with the nation, its Government, people, culture, heritage and, perhaps most important, its future.

In this context my colleagues may recall that in the very recent past we took significant steps to recognize the bilingual and multicultural nature not only of the capital itself but of the region as well. We have witnessed throughout the capital area, for example, the strengthening of the nature and beauty of the capital through physical development of parks, parkways and governmental accommodation. We are witnessing the evolution of a series of cultural activities, ranging from the Canada Day celebrations to heritage festivals and, of course, our special winter festival, focused in the heart of the capital, Winterlude.

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All of these efforts which derive from the ideas of the past are bringing together today the foundation on which the capital can securely build its evolution into the years to come.

What of this future? What provides the impetus to move our capital forward into the years to come? I would propose to you that this impetus is found in the definition of an image for the national capital which represents the multitude of beliefs, values, ideologies and aspirations of all the peoples of Canada. At the same time it is consistent with and supportive of the national capital functions, both as a capital and as a thriving urban community. As well as being a reflection of the heritage of the Canadian nation, it must also be an image looking to the short and long term future as an inspiration to all the world to take note of the capital of Canada.

In this context, we must recognize our assets of multiculturalism, our bilingual nature and the constantly evolving nature of the organization and functioning of the nation's capital, and build on these assets over the years to come.

Earlier I mentioned the natural beauty of the capital and noted the impact it has had on the thoughts of those people of the time who helped shape our present environment. This natural asset was recognized as having very much a regional as well as local aspect. The rivers, Gatineau and the Ottawa, formed a natural crossroads for trade and commerce, linking into the St. Lawrence system. From the high bluffs overlooking this crossroads, one could survey the whole of the Gatineau Hills for great distances both east and west along the Ottawa River. In its time, the crossroads developed into a centre for

the lumbering industry due to the rich forestry resources in the region, the availability of rivers for transport and the growing population developing around the communications node. The river, while physically separating the original Upper and Lower Canada, acted at the same time as a linking element, being the common means of travel and centre of the working environment.

This nucleus of original settlers, traders and lumbermen has now grown to fill some 13 municipalities and 2 provincial regions in the area. While the numbers of people have greatly increased and, with time, the complexity of all aspects of the area has increased, the heritage remains. It is a heritage which will always speak out for the recognition of a multicultural bilingual people in an area of the country of very great natural beauty and drama.

If the cultural and environmental elements which make up our capital region today have not changed that greatly over the years, the complexities of society and government have. We live in an era where the strength and expression of the national capital and Government have grown considerably. To house the functions of Government and to provide for the maintenance and efficient working of this region, a complex system of multi-governmental infrastructures has evolved to supply services to the residents of, and visitors to, the nation's capital. With this growth in the complexity of Government and regional infrastructure, the problems of conveying the common identity and heritage of the capital to the public beyond its limits becomes very cumbersome. The problem becomes one of expressing within the context of past and present the ideas, symbols and aspirations of the very diverse elements which make up the various provinces in the federation—that multitude of elements which binds the provinces together into one unified nation.

As alluded to earlier, we are living in a time of communication and the use of multicultural activities to create a sense of belonging together within the framework of the nation. This direction, or pulling together, is currently manifested in some of our more sophisticated advertising campaigns bringing to the people of Canada a new focus on the heritage and cultural aspects of the capital.

In and around the capital area we are seeing a strong direction being taken to highlight the bilingual and multicultural nature, not just of the immediate region, but of the nation as a whole. Examples of this phenomenon are numerous but several of particular interest come to mind. Clearly, Canada Day is a day for celebrating our common roots and cultural assets. We have seen this celebration expand from Parliament Hill and throughout the National Capital Region to the nation as a whole, all being linked together through an advanced telecommunications network.

In a like manner, we have witnessed the Winterlude Festival grow from an insignificant local effort to one of national and international importance. This project has probably contributed more to the perceived cultural and recreational consolidation of the region and nation than anything, excepting our Canada Day celebrations. It is these types of publicly oriented