

Newfoundland and Labrador Defense League (NLDL)



Newfoundland and Labrador – Make it Yours

www.nldl.org

Media Advisory

Topic: The Newfoundland and Labrador Defense League (nldl.org) seeks recognition of our people, by the Parliament of Canada, as a “Nation within a united Canada”

Date: January 10, 2007

On January 10th the Newfoundland and Labrador Defense League (nldl.org) sent letters of request, in both official languages, to all 308 members of the Canadian Parliament, the 105 members of the Senate and the Governor General of Canada. A copy of this request was also sent to the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Honorable Danny Williams, and an English language version is included with this advisory (see below).

In requesting that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador be recognized as a “nation within a united Canada”, it is not the intention of the NLDL to address the issue of Sovereignty for our province. As identified within the request, the NLDL membership firmly believe that, as a part of a larger Country, it is imperative that our unique culture, including our music, literature, art, etc. are officially recognized and protected. We believe that recognition of our people as a nation will provide opportunities that allow us to more easily ensure that our unique cultural identity does not disappear into the mists of history.

The NLDL further believes that by making this request we can more easily determine the true level of support for our people inside of the Canadian Parliament. An identical motion, regarding the Quebecois people, was passed in the House of Commons in November of 2006 by an overwhelming margin. We believe that the response or lack of one to this NLDL request will publicly clarify once and for all whether or not the passing of the Quebecois motion was truly the result of a desire to recognize distinct cultures within Canada or simply an attempt by the various political parties to gain a stronger foothold in the vote rich province of Quebec.

Contact Information:

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Date: January 10, 2007

To: All members of Parliament & Senate

Cc: Governor General, Premier Williams, NL

From: NLDL Executive and members

In the same spirit of understanding and cultural celebration with which the Quebecois people have been recognized by the Parliament of Canada, the NLDL respectfully request that the your party introduce a motion before the House of Commons recognizing Newfoundlanders and Labradorians as a Nation within a united Canada.

The NLDL fully recognizes the unique culture and history of the Quebecois people and the sense of pride with which they view their culture. We also applaud the understanding and acceptance afforded to the Quebecois nation by our federal government. While we are extremely happy for our neighbors within Canada, the NLDL strongly believes that singling out one cultural group for official recognition, while ignoring other unique cultures, is not reflective of the concept of equality or to Canada's proud multi-cultural traditions.

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador have a unique history both outside and inside of Canada. Our music, art, history, cuisine, literature, dialects, society, military history, phraseology and language are unique to our people alone. Denying this reality by opposing the presentation, and acceptance, of a motion recognizing this fact would be to claim that the culture of our people, developed over hundreds of years, had become unrecognizable after a mere 57 years of Confederation. If this were accepted to be true it would signal a dark day for the Canadian people as it could only mean that Canada does not protect, nurture and celebrate the diversity of its people.

A Royal Commission survey conducted in 2003 found that over 70% of Canadians recognized the people of Newfoundland and Labrador as being distinct. This level of acceptance for a unique culture is unprecedented in Canadian history and speaks volumes about the understanding and caring of Canada's citizens. The time has now come for the people's government to formally recognize what the people themselves already know.

The Newfoundland and Labrador population should not and cannot be denied its rightful recognition as a nation within a united Canada. If Canada is to honestly regard itself as a country that is understanding and proud of its diverse peoples, government will move quickly to introduce and pass this motion.

Respectfully,
Myles Higgins
NLDL Executive Member

The NLDL is a non-partisan, citizens, coalition composed of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians from across Canada. We are dedicated to the planning, development and promotion of initiatives for the empowerment of the Newfoundland and Labrador people.