

Constitution features new wrinkles

by Murray Moore

The greatest effect of the proclamation of the Constitution Act last Saturday in Ottawa by Queen Elizabeth II for the average Canadian in his daily life could be the inclusion in the country's constitution of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Many of the rights in the charter are not new. But since the rights included in the charter are part of the constitution, a citizen can choose to go to court if he feels that one of his constitutional rights has been infringed, or denied.

Fundamental freedoms guaranteed in the constitution are freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other communication mediums; freedom of peaceful assembly; and freedom of association.

The constitution recognizes English and French as the official languages of Canada.

The Queen remains the country's head of state. Patriation of the constitution means that Canada can now amend its constitution entirely on its own.

Sections in the charter of rights cover fundamental freedoms, democratic rights, the right to live and to seek employment anywhere in Canada, legal rights, equality rights, Canada's official languages, minority language education rights, Canada's multicultural heritage, and native peoples' rights.

Under legal rights, every Canadian has the right to know the reason for his arrest, has the right to legal counsel, and the right

to question whether he must be held in jail.

An arrested person has the right to be promptly informed of the charge or charges; to be tried within a reasonable time; to be presumed innocent until proven guilty in a fair and public trial; and to be granted bail according to the law.

The objectives of the federal resolution on the Canadian constitution were to patriate the constitution and create guidelines for changing the constitution; to entrench a Canadian charter of rights and freedoms; and to entrench the principle of equalization.

Some of the rights enshrined in the constitution can be cancelled by individual provinces. Fundamental freedoms, legal rights, and equality rights could be subject to a notwithstanding clause included in the charter, meaning that the federal parliament or provincial legislatures could pass legislation that conflicts with a specific provision. Such legislation altering a provision of the charter would expire after five years unless renewed.

In Quebec, Canadian citizens whose first language learned and still understood is English can choose to have their children educated in English, where numbers warrant.

In the other provinces, the Yukon and Northwest Territories, Canadian citizens whose first language learned and still understood is French have a similar right to have their children educated in French.

Copies of the charter of rights and freedoms are available free of charge at post offices and citizenship courts across the country.

Sugar shack fire consumes building

A maple syrup sugar bush shack was destroyed by fire last Thursday evening, reports Tay Township's Fire Chief Tom O'Hara.

Old Fort Road Volunteer Fire Department firefighters answered the call to snuff out the blaze on Tay's Con. 7 at County Road 23.

Hats off to secretaries in North Simcoe

It has been estimated that there are between 750 and 1,000 secretaries living and working in North Simcoe.

Since this is National Secretaries Week, this newspaper proudly salutes secretaries for the super jobs they do.

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THE CONSTITUTION COMES HOME SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE STAMP OFFER

To commemorate the patriation of the Constitution, Sterling Trust is giving away the Constitution Stamp on the Official First Day Cover issued by Canada Post for collectors:

To emphasize the unique importance of this issue, the stamp is designed in an unusual horizontal format by Friedrich Peter of Vancouver. The rich, traditional coloration enhances the graphic concept, based on pages of history, the right-hand side bearing the simple inscription "Constitution 1982".

(Source: Commemorative Stamp Bulletin)

Sterling Savings Account customers can receive this collectors' item by depositing \$20.00 or more into their accounts.

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