

Northern Insights

continued from page 5
 clout. The six Senators elected in Ontario could campaign exclusively in southern Ontario, get absolutely no votes north of Parry Sound, and still top the polls. Northern Ontario and the northern portions of the other provinces would be unrepresented in the new Senate.

There's a similar problem

with the reforms to the House of Commons. There will be immediate expansion of the House to 337 seats, adding more seats for Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta. Then, following the 1996 census, there will be a further redistribution of seats. Most public commentary on this part of the *Charlottetown Consensus* has focused on the

fact that Quebec will be assured of always having at least 25 per cent of House seats. That's not a big deal, since they've never had less than that since Confederation and even the worst population projections for Quebec indicate that the province wouldn't fall below 25 per cent until at least the year 2015.

My problem with the changes to the House is the same one I have with the
 continued on page 10

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THE NEW CONSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT

THE HIGHLIGHTS

Over the past two years, federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal leaders have consulted with thousands of Canadians and concerned 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 August 28, 1992 in Charlottetown 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.

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,

Distinct Society

to ensure the two levels of government work in harmony, the government of Canada commits to negotiating 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.

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

Avoiding Overlap and Duplication

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, various provinces would be assured a minimum amount of seats in the House of Commons.

Parliamentary Reform

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 reformed 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, nor dilute existing treaty rights.

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.

Aboriginal Self-Government

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

Deaf or hearing impaired:
 1-800-465-7735 (TTY/TDD)

Canada

