

# Charter brings justice to all

By SCOTT FENNEL  
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"We must respect everybody's rights..." as stated in the House of Commons in 1867 by Hector Louis Langevin.

It is now the fifth anniversary of the proclamation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Since that time, we have begun to see how the Charter affects the lives of individual Canadians. The Charter has brought in a new and exciting era in Canadian Law.

From the time of Canada's first occupation by our aboriginal peoples, to the arrival of the British and French settlers, and the immigrants from Europe and all parts of the world, this country has offered a sense of freedom to all of those who have lived here.

However, while we as Canadians assumed that equality of opportunity and participation applied to all members of our society, these beliefs were not upheld by law.

It was not until August 4, 1960,

that a Canadian Bill of Rights was approved by the House of Commons. That great parliamentarian and Prime Minister of the time, John Diefenbaker declared, "No Canadian can give me sanction to bigotry. This is the essence, one of the major portions of this Bill of Rights."

The Diefenbaker Government laid the historic groundwork for the Charter of Rights as we know it today. It includes not only the rights that have traditionally formed our heritage, but also those which we expect from our free and democratic society of the 1980s.

As one can see, the Charter is a living document. It has been designed to respond to the development of Canada. I feel that we as Canadians each hold a responsibility to ensure that our society moves towards the principles of tolerance, fairness and justice. The Charter supported by this government, and individual Canadians, is helping make this aspiration a reality.

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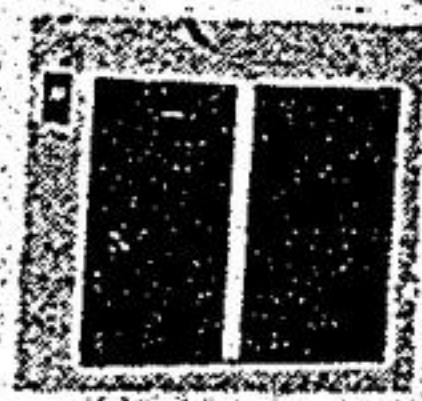
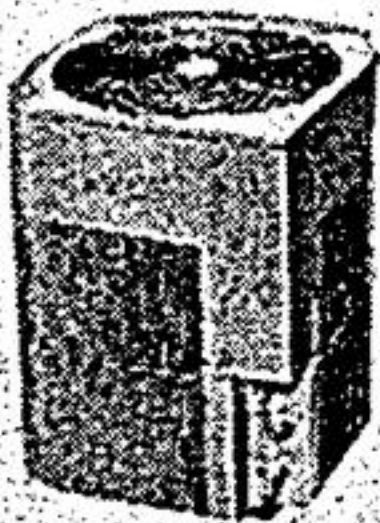
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