



Status of Women Council of the N.W.T.

P.O. Box 1320, Yellowknife, NWT X1A 2L9
403-920-6177

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September 29, 1992

Mr. Richard Nerysoo
MLA, Mackenzie Delta
Govt. of the NWT
Box 1320
Yellowknife, NWT
X1A 2L9



Dear Richard,

The Status of Women Council was disappointed that the Constitutional discussions in the Assembly yesterday were not more substantive. It was hoped that hard questions would be asked and clear answers would be provided. Instead, the visiting stakeholders and experts gave us speeches, pontificating many of the same broad generalities, glowing patriotic statements about saving Canada and dire warnings about what a "no" vote will mean, as we have been hearing from politicians for the past month.

My President and myself just returned from the Territorial/Provincial/Federal consultations of Status of Women Councils and Advisory Councils of Canada held this September 19 - 23 in St. John's, Newfoundland. As you can imagine, the Constitution was heavy on the agenda and on everyone's mind. All women's Councils have grave concerns about the Charlottetown Accord as have the Native Women's Association of Canada, N.A.C., groups representing Disabled Persons, groups such as N.O.V.M.I.W. (National Organization of Visible Minority and Immigrant Women), and One Voice, the National Coalition of Seniors Groups. Erik Kierans, the organizer of the "Unity Commission" and long-time statesman and politician, has said publicly that the Charlottetown Accord is not, in his opinion, "the best we can do" nor should we be forced to vote for a "pig in a poke". The Constitution of Canada is far too important a document for people to be voting on when the legal text is not yet available.

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The Council is pleased that you showed the courage and honesty to raise some very troubling issues regarding the referendum in the Assembly yesterday. Your contention that this is not a vote for self-government and that the Assembly represents the interests of all the people of the NWT is extremely well taken. The Council represents and works for all the women of the NWT and we are attempting to get as much information out to the regions as possible so that people can make an educated choice. We will not at this time be encouraging a yes or no vote, just an informed vote.

We have shared our concerns and accumulated information with our Minister, Nellie Cournoyea. Enclosed is a copy of the letter to our Minister regarding the Territorial/Provincial/Federal Women's Councils consultations and some detailed information on the issues of concern regarding the Charlottetown Accord. We hope you find the documents useful. Please feel free to copy and/or share the enclosed information in any way you see fit.

Sincerely,



Lynn Brooks,
Executive Director

cc Status of Women Council board members