

Information Release
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New Brunswick's Celtic People to Lobby Government for Recognition

Fredericton, NB – The New Brunswick *Celtic Affairs Committee*, a federated group representing the *Irish Canadian Cultural Association of NB* (ICCANB), the *NB Scottish Cultural Association*, (NBSCA) and the *Welsh Association of NB* are preparing to petition the soon-to-be new Government of New Brunswick for appropriate recognition of their cultural significance in this province.

While other Atlantic Provinces have embraced the uniqueness of their Celtic heritage in ways that boost not just their cultural advancement but educational and economic benefits as well, New Brunswick continues to consider the Celtic people of the province, which together make up over 45% of the province's population, to be within the framework of the English cultural grouping.

The group's main point is that, in New Brunswick's legislated bi-lingual status, it is very important to be sensitive to the actual cultural makeup within, to ensure all major cultural groups have a recognized voice, and that all significant groups are considered individually when developing cultural strategies for the province. New Brunswick inherently defines itself linguistically as 'Anglophone and Francophone' which the group supports. While most First Nations people in New Brunswick speak English only, they agree that it would be inconceivable to consider them under the "English" cultural category. Similarly, the Province justifiably distinguishes the Acadians culturally from the rest of the New Brunswick Francophone population.

Mr. Pat Murphy of Bathurst, Co-chair of the NB Celtic Affairs Committee and representative of the Irish Canadian Cultural Association of New Brunswick states the main issue simply: "Although, for the last several generations, people of Celtic ancestry have shared a language with the English, they do not identify themselves either culturally or historically as English." Co-chair Dan Taylor of Fredericton, representing the New Brunswick Scottish Cultural Association agrees: "Our story is completely different and is one that deserves to be included and celebrated, rather than excluded or ignored. We strongly believe that a focused strategy for the Celtic culture in this province can reap many benefits for all."

In that vein, in preparation for post-election 2010, the Celtic Affairs Committee has drafted a joint brief for consideration of the upcoming Government. The brief will be proposing, and stating the case for, greater recognition of the New Brunswick Celtic peoples as a vibrant and distinctive cultural group within New Brunswick's cultural fabric, and requesting that a Celtic Affairs Branch or Secretariat be established to define and promote social, cultural, historical and economic opportunities related to the Celtic culture of New Brunswick.

Leading up to the formal presentation of the brief, the Committee will be canvassing all candidates in the upcoming election to assess their understanding of the situation and garner support for stronger inclusion of Celtic culture in New Brunswick's cultural and socio-economic strategy.

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