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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 27, 1981

Mr. Edgar J. Martel
National President
Union Saint-Jean-Baptiste
1 Social Street
Woonsocket, Rhode Island 02895

Dear Mr. Martel:

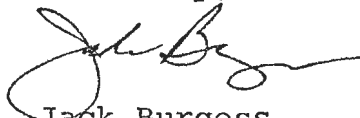
Thank you for your letter of February 4
to President Reagan.

The Office of Ethnic Affairs Newsletter
to which you refer was published by the
previous Administration and listed appoint-
ments made by them.

Please be assured that President Reagan is
desirous of appointing qualified Americans
of all ethnic backgrounds to positions of
responsibility in the government.

Thank you again for taking the time to write
and express your views.

Sincerely,



Jack Burgess
Special Assistant to
the President

file

E. Dole



UNION SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE

1 Social Street • Woonsocket, R.I. 02895 • Tel. (401) 769-0520

Office of the President

February 4, 1981

006855

The Honorable Ronald Reagan
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

We, of the Union Saint-Jean-Baptiste, have read with profound interest the June, 1980, issue of the Office of Ethnic Affairs News. It brought home answers to many questions of vital interest to the minority group we represent.

A mutual benefit society founded at the turn of the century by and for Americans of French descent, the Union Saint-Jean-Baptiste, numbering close to 50,000 members, has strived right along to achieve three goals: 1. to preserve our catholic faith and our cultural heritage; 2. to integrate into the mainstream of the American way of life our brothers of french extraction; 3. to elevate their living standard through grants, loans and scholarships which will give them access to higher education.

Though our society has helped out the underprivileged in many walks of life, it always gave top priority to educational assistance. As a result, many of our proteges became successful, even outstanding professors of French, mostly because they had received sufficient financial aid to complete their studies in Europe. Some of them came back with a doctorate from the University of Paris and even a few years of teaching experience in France. We are proud of our achievements since our philosophy is based on the principle that "Ethnics" should contribute the best there is in them, their ancestral culture, their religious convictions and their integrity, toward the social development of their new mother country, the United

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States of America. That is why we emphasize bilingualism. The mastery of the English language is a must; its necessity should not even be discussed. But Americans with real culture do not stop there. Besides, as Dr. Stephen Aiello, special assistant for Ethnic Affairs, to the former President, said so pertinently: "In a sense we are all Ethnic in the United States."

As we go through the list of new appointees, in the June issue of the Office of Ethnic Affairs News, under the title: "Appointments Update," we cannot, however, but notice a disturbing fact. We Americans of French descent have been around for a long long time. It is a known historical fact that without the assistance of the French land and sea forces there wouldn't be any United States: the arrival of General Rochambeau was commemorated with great pomp last summer, at Newport (Rhode Island). And then, during the Civil War many of the French from Quebec fought with the Union Army. On top of that, thousands upon thousands came over and made the industrial expansion possible in our country, following the Civil War. As a result, a census taken in the early days of this century gave us a total of about 6,000,000 Americans of French descent; making us the most important minority after the Hispanics and the Blacks.

Today, of course, the ethnic quality of our people has been diluted somewhat through mixed marriages, but many of our people still hold on to their culture and their religion; and the influx from Quebec makes up for a good percentage of our losses. That is why a mutual benefit society like the Union Saint-Jean-Baptiste was able to keep on developing and flourishing right along.

From the beginning we have decided that the wisest course, for our society, was to stay out of politics. And we have been adhering strictly to that policy. This, however, does not mean that we should not claim what we consider to be our fair share of the plush positions in the upper spheres of government. Again, referring to the list of appointments of your June issue, we realized with a deep feeling of dismay that there is not a single French name among the appointees.

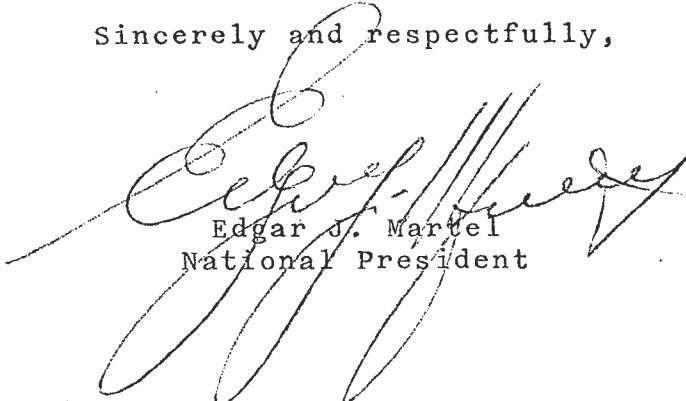
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Certainly we're not blaming anyone in particular for this state of affairs. Undoubtedly someone is to blame; it cannot be just a matter of circumstances. But we are not laying the blame on any individual. Understand, however, that as national president of the largest society for Americans of French descent, I happen to be some sort of polarizing factor with respect to such questions as a fair share of lucrative positions for our own people. It may be that not enough of them applied for the jobs; and then again they might not have known whom to contact or how to go about it.

In any case, Mr. President, we wish you would have one of your most trusted assistants take this matter up with key people in the Office of Bilingual Education and let us know their reaction.

Hoping to hear from you soon, please accept, Mr. President, our appreciation for your anticipated understanding and cooperation. And, at this early hour, rest assured of our very best wishes for a fruitful and rewarding term as President of our country.

Sincerely and respectfully,



Edgar J. Martel
National President

EJM/lrs