



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

THE BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS SUPPORTS THE COFFIN FAMILY IN SEEKING THE TRUTH ABOUT WILBERT COFFIN'S CONVICTION

Ottawa, Wednesday, October 18, 2006 – “The Bloc Québécois supports the family of Wilbert Coffin in its attempt to throw light on the events that led to his conviction. We are pleased to see that, 50 years after those events, the federal Department of Justice has finally agreed to revise the file, something that is absolutely necessary because of the many serious allegations of irregularities that have been raised over the years,” said **Réal Ménard**, MP for Hochelaga and Bloc Québécois Justice critic.

Réal Ménard and his colleague **Raynald Blais**, MP for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, attended a meeting with members of the Coffin family and Kerry Scullion, Senior Counsel with the Department of Justice's Criminal Conviction Review Group. Wilbert Coffin's sister **Mary Coffin** and his son **Jimmy Coffin** represented the family at the meeting.

According to the family representatives, the trial that led to Wilbert Coffin's conviction was botched in the authorities' haste to find a guilty party and to reassure American tourists, who brought large amounts of money into the Gaspé region in the 1950s. Over the years, this argument has received support from many historians and other observers.

Family members hope that the review process currently underway will clear Wilbert Coffin's name and show that he was not the one who murdered the American hunters.

“The Bloc Québécois wants to shed light on this story which has fueled discussion in the Gaspé for too long and marred the image of rigour and integrity enjoyed by our justice system. A number of historians have deplored the fact that there was no direct, overwhelming evidence against Wilbert Coffin and that Mr. Coffin's lawyer showed negligence by failing to bring witnesses for the defence, including Wilbert Coffin himself. It is high time we got to the bottom of this so that everyone can close this chapter and move on,” said **Raynald Blais**.

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