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HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CANADA

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**Saskatoon-Wanuskewin**

## Government of Canada recognizes the national significance of the Doukhobor Dugout House

**For Immediate Release**

**December 1, 2008**

**BLAINE LAKE, SASKATCHEWAN** – Maurice Vellacott, Member of Parliament for Saskatoon-Wanuskewin, on behalf of Canada’s Environment Minister and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, the Honourable Jim Prentice, today announced the designation of the Doukhobor Dugout House at Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan as a site of national historic significance.

“In recognizing the Doukhobor Dugout House as a national historic site, we are celebrating the rich ethnocultural heritage of this great country,” Mr. Vellacott said. “This site is a testament to the ingenuity and tenacity of early settlers as they adapted to their prairie surroundings.”

The Government of Canada made this designation on the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC). A commemorative plaque that will highlight the importance of the dugout house in Canada will be unveiled at a future date.

Constructed in 1899, the house is a rare surviving example of a practical and temporary form of initial shelter constructed not only by Doukhobors, but also by many settlers of various ethnic backgrounds upon their arrival on the Canadian prairies. These initial and expedient dwellings were typically replaced as quickly as possible by more permanent ones, as required under the conditions of the homestead policy in the *Dominion Lands Act*.

“If the remaining walls could talk they would tell a story of hardship and perseverance,” added Mr. Vellacott. “The experience of the Doukhobors in Canada is one of the many chapters in our nation’s long and rich history.”

Canada’s system of national historic sites now includes over 930 national historic sites, over 600 national historic persons and almost 400 national historic events. The majority of national historic sites are owned and operated by private individuals, not-for-profit groups and corporations. Parks Canada protects and presents 157 of these special places on behalf of Canadians.

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**Information:**

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