

CONFIDENTIAL

L. P. M.



Prime Minister

(2)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

*You will want to be aware
of this impending development.
It will not be helpful.*

London SW1A 2AH

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13 February 1981

Dear Michael,

P. M. 13/2

Canadian Constitution

As I told you on the telephone, the Canadian Minister of External Affairs, said in the Federal Parliament this afternoon that he was ready to make a statement on the activities of the British High Commissioner: but was then interrupted by the Speaker, who declared that Question Time had come to an end. We assume that Mr MacGuigan will now make his statement on Monday. I enclose a revised text of the statement: this incorporates, in the third paragraph, most of the amendments which we suggested. We do not yet know whether Mr MacGuigan intends to use the words in square brackets in that paragraph.

yours ever

Roderic Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

M O D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
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STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS FOR CANADA, THE HONOURABLE MARK MacGUIGAN, TO THE CANADIAN HOUSE OF COMMONS ON FEBRUARY 13, 1981 - AT 11.00 a.m.

Following questions by the Honourable Member for Oshawa, an enquiry has been made into the activities of the British High Commissioner. This enquiry, conducted with the assistance of officials, concerned contacts Sir John Ford has had with elected officials at the federal and provincial levels.

The Canadian Government has absolutely no objection to anything the High Commissioner may have done to represent the position of the British Government in relation to its interests or to communicate his understanding of the situation in the British Parliament. This is an entirely appropriate type of diplomatic activity. In another context, the Prime Minister stated the government's position on such matters to the House on 16 December, 1977. Part of the High Commissioner's activity, of course, was of this type.

However, there are indications that the High Commissioner went beyond these normal functions [into internal political questions]. I am assured that the High Commissioner has noted the views expressed in this House. I have also been informed that there is no intention on the part of the British Government to intervene in affairs which are properly matters for Canadians.

This information has been shared with the British authorities through diplomatic channels. The Canadian Government has made, and will make, no recommendation to the British Government. It has been known for some time that Sir John Ford was scheduled to retire soon. His successor has now been named and the Canadian Government welcomed the appointment on January 27.

It would be inappropriate for me to make public the substance of our findings. I shall have no further comment on this question and I consider the matter closed.