

OO OTTAWA
GRS 584
CONFIDENTIAL
FROM FCO 151400Z MAY 1981
TO IMMEDIATE OTTAWA
TELEGRAM NUMBER 144 OF 15 MAY

CALL ON MR PYM BY MR COLINETTE

1. COLINETTE (PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY OF THE SPEAKER OF THE CANADIAN HOUSE OF COMMONS) ACCOMPANIED BY HAGGAN (CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSION) CALLED THIS MORNING ON MR PYM AFTER SPENDING HALF A HOUR WITH OFFICIALS. HE BORE A MESSAGE FROM MR TRUDEAU TO THE EFFECT THAT HE WAS ''ADAMANT'' THAT THE UK PARLIAMENT SHOULD PASS THE CANADIANS MEASURES THROUGH BY 1 JULY. THIS WAS ASSUMING A FAVOURABLE SUPREME COURT RULING AND ONE WHICH DID NOT SUGGEST A DIMINUTION OF THE PRESENT CONSTITUTIONAL PACKAGE. IN THE LATTER CIRCUMSTANCES, COLINETTE SAID THE CANADIAN PARLIAMENT WOULD NEED TO DEBATE THE WHOLE QUESTION AFRESH AND THERE WOULD BE NO QUESTION OF CANADIAN PROPOSALS REACHING US IN THE NEAR OR EVEN PREDICTABLE FUTURE.
2. COLINETTE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN ASKED TO CONVEY THIS MESSAGE (WHICH HAD BEEN REINFORCED FROM OTTAWA LAST NIGHT) DESPITE APPRECIATION IN CANADA OF DIFFICULTIES AT THIS END. THEY REALISED THAT IT HAD TAKEN TIME TO COMPLETE PROCESSES IN CANADA: THEY STILL HOPED TO GET THE RESOLUTION TO US SWIFTLY AFTER THE SUPREME COURT VERDICT WHICH WAS EXPECTED AT THE END OF MAY OR IN VERY EARLY JUNE. HE REEMPHASISED FEDERAL WORRIES ABOUT THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN CANADA IF THERE WAS DELAY IN THE UK PARLIAMENT. UNTIL OUR PARLIAMENT HAD ENACTED THE LEGISLATION, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE TREADING WATER IN CANADA AND THE HEALING PROCESS WITH THE PROVINCES COULD NOT BEGIN.
3. MR PYM SAID IT LOOKED AS THOUGH THE RIGHT MESSAGE ABOUT THE BRITISH PARLIAMENTARY SITUATION WAS NOT GETTING ACROSS TO THE CANADIANS. HE REMINDED COLINETTE OF HIS PREDECESSOR'S INDICATION THAT IF THE PROPOSALS DID NOT REACH US IN JANUARY THEY WOULD NOT GET THROUGH IN THE CURRENT SESSION. HE FULLY

UNDERSTOOD THE CANADIAN POSITION (BETTER THAN IT SEEMED THEY UNDERSTOOD OURS): BUT IT WAS THE CASE THAT THEIR REQUEST WAS TAKING UNCONSCIONABLY LONGER TO REACH US THAN ORIGINALLY PREDICTED. THE HOUSE OF COMMONS HAD NEVER BEEN A RUBBER STAMP AND HE EXPECTED DIFFICULTY WHATEVER THE SUPREME COURT SAID, THOUGH MUCH WOULD DEPEND ON THE NATURE OF ITS VERDICT AND THE DEGREE OF UNANIMITY.

4. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND MR PYM MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE THOUGHT THE MESSAGE FROM MR TRUDEAU WAS UNREALISTIC. BARRING A MIRACLE HE DID NOT EXPECT THE LEGISLATION TO GO THROUGH BY 1 JULY. IT WAS MORE CONCEIVABLE THAT THE LEGISLATION COULD GO THROUGH BEFORE THE SUMMER RECESS (IE END JULY) AND HE ACCEPTED THAT THE MOOD IN PARLIAMENT MIGHT HAVE IMPROVED AS A RESULT OF THE POSITION OVER THE SUPREME COURT. BUT THERE WAS STILL A CHANCE OF FAILURE - SOMETHING HE HAD POINTED OUT FREQUENTLY INCLUDING TO MR CHRETIEN. JUST AS MR TRUDEAU HAD BEEN UNABLE TO GET HIS PROPOSALS THROUGH ON THE TIMESCALE HE WANTED IN CANADA, SO IT WAS LIKELY TO BE DIFFICULT FOR US. HE EMPHASISED HOWEVER THAT HMG WOULD OF COURSE EXERCISE THEIR BEST ENDEAVOURS, IN LINE WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENTS THAT THE MATTER WOULD BE DEALT WITH AS EXPEDITIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE.

5. COLINETTE UNDERTOOK TO PASS THIS MESSAGE CAREFULLY TO MR TRUDEAU. MY OWN GUESS IS IT MAY GET GARBLED ON THE WAY BECAUSE OF FEARS OF MR TRUDEAU'S REACTIONS TO MR PYM'S EXPOSITION OF THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION HERE. I THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT YOU TAKE SUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES TO UNDERLINE MR PYM'S POINTS TO YOUR SENIOR AND RELIABLE CONTACTS. YOU SHOULD HOWEVER BE VERY CAREFUL TO AVOID SPEAKING TO ANYONE WHO MIGHT LEAK THIS MORNING'S CONVERSATION. MR PYM STRONGLY EMPHASISED THE NEED FOR TOTAL SECURITY.

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SIR E YOUDE

MR DAY

MR URE

LORD N G LENNOX

CABINET OFFICE

COPIES TO:

SIR I SINCLAIR

MR FREELAND

DR PARRY

LEGAL ADVS.

LORD MORAN C/O HDS OF MISSION POD

PS/CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF
LANCASTER

PS/LORD CHANCELLOR

PS/LORD PRESIDENT

MR H STEEL, LAW OFFICERS' DEPT

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