



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

31 July 1981

THE CANADIAN CONSTITUTION: CONVERSATION IN OTTAWA

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 28 July on this subject.

The Prime Minister recalls the "conversation" as a couple of sentences exchanged while she and Mr. Trudeau walked across the lawn at Montebello from the helicopter to the hotel. She and Mr. Trudeau agreed that there was no need for the bilateral meeting, which had been provisionally arranged, to take place as nothing new had happened. The Prime Minister told Mr. Trudeau that, whatever happened, patriation could not be taken during the "spill-over" here in October. Both Heads of Government agreed that they would have to consult as to how best to proceed once the Canadian Supreme Court had given its decision.

The Prime Minister told Mr. Trudeau that she naturally wished to get the legislation through the UK Parliament and that she, therefore, must be the judge of the best time to make the attempt.

I am sending copies of this letter to David Wright (Cabinet Office) and David Heyhoe (Chancellor of the Duchy's Office).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

R.M.J. Lyne, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



Pompey Pinder

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

28 July 1981

I presume that the account in the attached telegram is more or less accurate.

Ans 28/7

Dear Michael,

This "conversation" was a couple of sentences exchanged while sitting from top room to the hotel!

The Canadian Constitution: Conversation in Ottawa

For ease of reference, I attach a copy of the Ottawa telegram number 400 of 24 July asking whether the Constitution was in fact discussed informally at Montebello.

The Canadian High Commission have indicated to us that there was an informal conversation in which (they say) the Prime Minister reiterated her 'commitment' and Mr Trudeau re-emphasised the need for speed in the UK, once the request for patriation reached this country. The High Commission added that Mr Trudeau had indicated his willingness to delay the request until it was in the right time relationship to the new session of the UK Parliament ie perhaps till October.

I would be grateful if you could let me know whether the account of the Canadian High Commission is accurate so that we can reply to Lord Moran.

I am copying this letter to David Wright (Cabinet Office), Wilfred Hyde (Cabinet Office) and David Heyhoe (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office).

Yours ever  
Rodric Lyne

(R M J Lyne)  
Private Secretary

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and must help  
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M O'D B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing St

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FM OTTAWA 241440Z JUL 81  
TO PRIORITY FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 400 OF 24 JULY

CONSTITUTION

1. REPORT IN TODAY'S GLOBE AND MAIL SAYS QUOTE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER MARGARET THATCHER WAS "NONCOMMITTAL BUT SUPPORTIVE" DURING A BRIEF DISCUSSION THIS WEEK WITH PRIME MINISTER PIERRE TRUDEAU ABOUT THE PASSAGE OF HIS PATRIATION PACKAGE IN WESTMINSTER. A SPOKESMAN FOR MR TRUDEAU SAID IN AN INTERVIEW YESTERDAY THE TWO LEADERS CHATTED ABOUT THE CONSTITUTION OVER A MEAL DURING THE THREE-DAY ECONOMIC SUMMIT AT NEARBY MONTEBELLO. UNQUOTE.

2. GRATEFUL TO KNOW WHETHER THE CONSTITUTION WAS IN FACT DISCUSSED INFORMALLY AT MONTEBELLO AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS SAID.

MORAN

CANADIAN CONSTITUTION LIMITED  
NAD  
CCD  
P & CD  
PCCU  
PARLIAMENTARY UNIT  
NEWS D  
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PS  
PS/LPS  
PS/MR RIDLEY  
PS/MR LUCE  
PS/MR HURD  
PS/PUS  
SIR E YOUDE  
MR DAY  
MR URE  
LORD N G LENNOX  
CABINET OFFICE

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DR PARRY }

PS/CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF  
LANCASTER

PS/LORD CHANCELLOR

PS/LORD PRESIDENT

MR H STEEL, LAW OFFICERS' DEPT

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