



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Prime Minister
 The timing is v. awkward.
 (We are already going to have to
 ask you to see President Zia on
 6 October & to give him lunch.) But
 the subject is important. Can we
 offer him 30 minutes?

30 September 1980

Yes - but no
 more engagements
 on that day
 no

Print 30/9

Dear Michael,

Canadian Emissary

Since the Prime Minister saw Mr Trudeau on 25 June, we have been intermittently discussing with the Canadians their proposal to send over an emissary to explain constitutional proposals to HMG and put the Federal Government's case across to opinion-formers in this country. The Canadians have now asked us formally, through their High Commission, whether the Hon John Roberts, Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister for the Environment, who has also played an important part in recent discussions between the Federal Government and the provinces on the constitution, might be received by the Prime Minister on 5, 6 or 7 October. Mr Roberts would come as personal envoy from Mr Trudeau to the Prime Minister, but would also probably want to give publicity to the Federal case in this country.

We were at first a little reluctant to recommend acceptance of such an emissary before the main lines of discussion of these constitutional proposals in the Canadian Parliament (due to reconvene on 6 October) became clear. However, at the legal talks with the Canadians which took place at the end of last week (reported in FCO telno 309 of 26 September - copy attached), it emerged that the Canadians will be asking us to pass through Parliament measures including important amendments to the Canadian Constitution, eg the incorporation of a Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This means that the Canadian proposals are likely to excite controversy both in Canada and in the UK. As a result, we now believe that it would be useful to take the

/opportunity



opportunity of such a Canadian visit to drive home to the Canadians at a high level the kind of difficulties which may be experienced in Parliament if we are asked to put these proposals through in their present form.

Lord Carrington naturally realises how pre-occupied the Prime Minister will be with the forthcoming Party Conference; but he hopes that she might find a short period, perhaps on 6 October, to receive this emissary. If she can do so, more detailed briefing material will follow. Lord Carrington would also see Mr Roberts separately. We are, in addition, considering the possibility of a message from Mrs Thatcher to Mr Trudeau and will let you have our recommendations soon.

Yours etc

Paul

(P Lever)
Private Secretary

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30 SEP 1980

