

GRS 285
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FM OTTAWA 052115Z NOV 81
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 624 OF 5 NOVEMBER

CONSTITUTION

MY TELNOS: 622 AND 623

1. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC FINAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE THIS AFTERNOON, MR TRUDEAU WENT DIRECTLY TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, TABLED THE TEXT OF THE AGREEMENT AND MADE A BRIEF STATEMENT SUMMARISING THE AGREEMENT AND THE PARTICULAR POINTS OF DIFFERENCE WITH THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT HE WAS NOT SURE WHETHER TO AMEND THE RESOLUTION NOW BEFORE THE HOUSE OR SUBMIT A NEW ONE AND HOPED THAT THE LEADERS OF THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE AND THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTIES WOULD AGREE TO CONSULT TOMORROW.

2. MR CLARK FOR THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES SAID THAT HE WAS NATURALLY HAPPY TO HAVE THE MATTER BACK IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS WHICH HAD CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE FEDERAL PACKAGE. HE DWELT AT CONSIDERABLE LENGTH ON HIS CONCERN AT QUEBEC'S ISOLATION AND POTENTIAL SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES. HE THOUGHT THAT THE HOUSE HAD A FURTHER ROLE TO PLAY IN REFINING THE RESOLUTION WITH THE AIM OF SEEKING SOLUTIONS TO THE OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS AND EVEN BROADER AGREEMENT. HE CONFINED HIMSELF TO SAYING THAT HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO MEET THE PRIME MINISTER TOMORROW TO DISCUSS TIMING. MR BROADBENT OFFERED UNRESERVED CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PREMIERS FOR REACHING A BROAD CANADIAN CONSENSUS.

3. MR CLARK WAS OBVIOUSLY SEEKING TO MAXIMISE HIS PARTY'S CREDIT FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE FEDERAL RESOLUTION IN PARLIAMENT AND TO KEEP HIS OPTIONS OPEN. IT IS NOT TO BE DISCOUNTED THAT HE WILL MAKE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO NEGOTIATE FURTHER CHANGES WITH A VIEW TO GETTING QUEBEC ON BOARD. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH MANY CANADIANS WILL OF COURSE BE CONCERNED AT QUEBEC'S ISOLATION, IT SEEMS DOUBTFUL THAT MR CLARK WILL FIND MUCH SUPPORT FOR PROLONGED AND OBSTRUCTIONIST DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT.

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MY TELNOS 622, 623 AND 624

1. THE IMMEDIATE CREDIT FOR THE BREAKTHROUGH WHICH OCCURRED OVERNIGHT GOES, SURPRISINGLY, TO MR PECKFORD OF NEWFOUNDLAND WHO DRAFTED THE COMPROMISE LAST EVENING AND SOLD IT DURING THE NIGHT AND EARLY THIS MORNING TO THE MAJORITY OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS.
2. HOWEVER NO AGREEMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN REACHED IF MR TRUDEAU HAD NOT ENGAGED IN THE CONFERENCE WITH A GENUINE PREPAREDNESS TO COMPROMISE. IN THE EVENT HE HAS ACHIEVED THE GREATER PART OF WHAT HE SET OUT TO DO LAST YEAR, ALTHOUGH HE HAD TO WATER DOWN THE CHARTER OF RIGHTS, DROP THE REFERENDUM PROVISION (AND THEREFORE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE) IN THE AMENDING FORMULA AND CONCEDE OPTING OUT. HE ALSO HAD TO ACCEPT THE ISOLATION OF THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT AND ITS DANGEROUS IMPLICATIONS.
3. MR LEVESQUE SPOKE RANCOROUSLY AT THE FINAL SESSION BUT DID NOT REVEAL WHAT ACTION HE NOW PROPOSES TO TAKE; WE SHOULD KNOW AT THE LATEST BY MONDAY, 9 NOVEMBER WHEN HE SPEAKS AT THE OPENING OF THE QUEBEC NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CLAIMS TO BE CONFIDENT OF THE SUPPORT OF THE QUEBEC PEOPLE; SO DOES THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT. BOTH CLAIMS ARE SUPERFICIALLY VALID GIVEN THE LARGE NUMBER OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES THAT BOTH HAVE IN THE PROVINCE. IT MAY WELL BE THAT, AS THE SPECULATION HERE SUGGESTS, THERE WILL HAVE TO BE ANOTHER REFERENDUM. WHATEVER ELSE HAPPENS, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT TODAY'S AGREEMENT WILL MAKE IT THAT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT FOR MR LEVESQUE TO CONTROL THE OUTRIGHT SEPARATISTS IN HIS PARTY.
4. THE NATIVE PEOPLES WILL NOT BE HAPPY WITH THE WAY THEIR RIGHTS ARE TO BE TREATED UNDER THE NEW ARRANGEMENT AND MAY WELL THEREFORE CONTINUE THEIR LOBBYING IN LONDON.
5. PLEASE ENSURE THAT LORD MORAN C/O HEADS OF MISSION SECTION HAS A COPY OF THIS TELEGRAM AND MY TELS UNDER REFERENCE.

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