



clwd  
CO  
LPO

CANADA

RS

MLWHITRAGS

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

4 December 1981

Canada

The Canadian Prime Minister telephoned the Prime Minister at 3 p.m. this afternoon. I enclose a copy of the record of conversation.

After the telephone call the Prime Minister commented that it was highly desirable to complete legislative action in Parliament as soon after the Christmas Recess as possible. She hoped that the Second Reading of the Bill might take place on 19 January and that the remaining stages could be completed with Royal Assent being received in the following week.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Heyhoe (Lord President's Office), David Wright (Cabinet Office) and Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office).

your use  
John

Roderic Lyne, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

JFA

CONFIDENTIAL

RECORD OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND  
THE PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA AT 3 P.M. ON FRIDAY 4 DECEMBER 1981

---

Mr. Trudeau said that he wished to convey the good news about the Canadian Constitution. Nine and a half Provinces were now in line. The Senate would complete its consideration of the Resolution on the afternoon of 8 December. The Governor-General's Secretary would bring the Resolution to London that night and deliver it to the Palace on the morning of 9 December. The matter would then be in the hands of Her Majesty's Government. He wished to thank the Prime Minister for her steadfast help since June 1980. Her support had been of considerable assistance in producing a Resolution which met the criteria laid down by the Supreme Court.

The Prime Minister said that the Parliamentary calendar before Christmas was very full. The aim nevertheless was to have a First Reading of the Bill before the Christmas Recess and take the Second Reading after the Recess. It was best to follow normal procedures and avoid the appearance of pressure. There was already an Early Day Motion on the Order Paper which suggested that the passage of the Bill might not be entirely smooth. Mr. Trudeau said that he was very much in the Prime Minister's hands and would rely on her judgement. There were two arguments in favour of a quicker procedure. The Quebec Government would be as difficult as possible and would seek delay through the courts. Certain Indian leaders would also create difficulty. The longer the affair dragged on the greater the likelihood of difficulties with those at Westminster who had reservations. But if the Prime Minister was aware of the two complications he had mentioned, and still judged that it was not right to try to complete the process before Christmas, he would accept the situation. The Prime Minister reiterated that to apply pressure and to deny those interested in the Bill a proper opportunity to express their views would simply create trouble. After all, it had taken the Canadian Government much longer than they had originally expected to complete their own Parliamentary process. Mr. Trudeau said that his worry was that some Westminster MPs might mount the argument that Parliamentary action should wait until the various court proceedings were completed. If the Prime Minister was not concerned about that danger, he would entirely accept her judgement.

/The

CONFIDENTIAL

The Prime Minister commented that the legal action being taken by the Quebec Government was a matter for Canada. Our task was to handle the matter in the way best calculated to get the Resolution through Parliament.

Mr. Trudeau then asked whether discreet plans could be made for Her Majesty The Queen to visit Canada on 15 February (Flag Day) in connection with the celebration of the patriation of the Constitution. The Prime Minister said that it was difficult to give a precise answer until we had had the Second Reading of the Bill and heard the various arguments. Was there any fall-back date for a Royal visit? Mr. Trudeau said that alternative dates for the celebration were possible but he understood that they might not be convenient for The Queen. The Prime Minister said that her instinct was that a target date of 15 February would be rather tight from the Parliamentary point of view. She hoped she was wrong but there could be difficulties about meeting such a deadline. Mr. Trudeau commented that there could be some irritation in Canada about any undue delay. The Prime Minister said that she doubted whether such irritation would be justified. After all, at an earlier stage we had been expecting to receive the Canadian request nearly a year ago.

Mr. Trudeau said that he hoped that when the affair was concluded the Canadian Government would have an opportunity to show their gratitude to the Prime Minister by receiving her for an official visit. It was six years since a British Prime Minister had last paid an official visit. The Prime Minister replied that she would love to visit Canada when the matter had been resolved.