

CONFIDENTIAL

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

Ref. A06973

Canadian Constitution

Mr Michael Pitfield called Sir Robert Armstrong from Ottawa yesterday. He said that the Canadian Cabinet had been discussing arrangements for the patriation of the Canadian constitution following the passage of United Kingdom legislation. They had been planning for a Royal Visit to Canada on 15th February to mark the patriation. If a visit was to take place in February it would have to be in the middle of the month since any later would risk creating embarrassment because of the Quebec court case. Mr Pitfield knew that Mr Chretien had discussed this timing question when in London last week but Mr Pitfield confessed that he was unclear whether the British Government thought that patriation could be assured in time for a Royal Visit on 15th February or whether this was likely to be difficult.

2. Sir Robert Armstrong explained that the Canada Bill was to be introduced in the House of Commons in the week beginning 21st December and that the second reading would take place in the week beginning 18th January. Although we could be reasonably optimistic about the final outcome and passage of the Bill, the business managers were advised that it would be imprudent to try to cut corners or hurry the House of Commons in their handling of the Bill. In these circumstances, Sir Robert felt bound to confirm to Mr Pitfield what the Lord President had told Chretien, notably that it would be unwise to plan a Royal Visit for 15th February. If the Bill went through all its stages and procedures at a normal rate, it would be better to assume that Royal Assent might be arranged some time in March or even April. Sir Robert added, however, that he thought April would probably be on the pessimistic side.

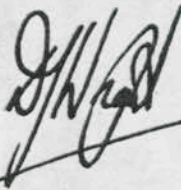
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FOI Exemption. (Wayland,  
20 June 2013*

A more precise judgement of the likely date when Royal Assent could be expected could probably best be made when the second reading was over.

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3. Mr Pitfield thanked Sir Robert Armstrong for this advice. He said that it helped him to have this confirmation of the Government's position. He thought that the longer things went on, the more difficult it could become for the Canadian Government, particularly with the impending Quebec court case. Matters could become particularly complicated if Royal Assent had not been obtained by the end of March.

4. I am sending copies of this note to John Coles (No 10), David Heyhoe (Lord President's Office) and Steven Gomersall (Lord Privy Seal's Office).



D J WRIGHT

18th December 1981



1988年10月  
1988年10月