



FROM THE PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE  
AND THE CHIEF WHIP

John Coles  
10 Downing Street

Canada  
Prime Minister

To be aware. We may discover  
on Monday that the Canadian Government  
see no problem.

A. J. C. 11/3

M.A. M. 15/3

12 March 1982

Dear John,

CANADA BILL: PROCEEDINGS IN THE LORDS

You asked for a note on the proceedings in the Lords on the Canada Bill.

Second Reading is next Thursday, 18 March with Committee on 23 March and Third Reading on 25 March. There is no question of the Bill being held up or amended but Lord Stewart of Fulham for the official opposition tabled yesterday evening the following motion which will be taken (probably formally) immediately after the Second Reading of the Bill.

Lord Stewart of Fulham to move that this House, aware of the anxieties which have been expressed about the Canada Bill now before the House by representatives of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, is confident that the Government of Canada, in consultation with representatives of the Aboriginal Peoples, will use the provisions of the Bill to promote their welfare.

The question has arisen of how the Government should handle the motion on Thursday. It is so innocuous in its terms that any attempt by the Government to defeat it might be misinterpreted. On the other hand it is patronising in tone and, if agreed to by the Lords without a division, could well cause offence in Canada. This is the view of the Chancellor of the Duchy. The Chief Whip (Lords) believes that it will receive some support in the House and that strong pressure on peers by the Government could well be misunderstood. There may well be some defections by Conservatives and the combined opposition benches may vote for the motion in the belief that it will do no harm.

The Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor of the Duchy discussed the matter today. They agreed that Lord Stewart should be asked to withdraw his motion or not to move it on the day. In addition a telegram has gone tonight to our High Commissioner in Ottawa to seek his urgent views by Monday morning.

Subject to any developments on Monday, the Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor of the Duchy would like to discuss the handling of the motion with the Prime Minister, the Lord President and the Chief Whip (Lords) on Tuesday or Wednesday of next week prior to the Second Reading on Thursday. The Chancellor would be very happy to discuss

the matter on the telephone. I should add that there will be a strong Whip in the Lords on Thursday.

I am copying this note to Brian Fall (Foreign Secretary's Office) and David Heyhoe (Lord President's Office).

Yours sincerely  
Michael Pownall

M G POWNALL

28th June 1982



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