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Canadian High Commission



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Saint Commissariat du Canada

Macdonald House
1 Grosvenor Square
London, W1X 0AB

27/6
June 25, 1990

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Dear Mr. Powell,

Current events in Canada have, understandably, generated considerable discussion and public comment. I thought you might find the attached background information of use.

Yours sincerely,

G. Lavertu
Deputy High Commissioner

Mr. Charles D. Powell
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
Overseas Affairs
Prime Minister's Office
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

PRESS LINES ON MEECH LAKE

On June 22, the Manitoba and Newfoundland legislatures adjourned without voting on the Meech Lake accord, which, since its signing in April 1987, had been ratified by Parliament and eight Provinces representing 94 percent of the population.

This brings to a close the constitutional round that began in 1986.

Canada's constitutional evolution has been marked by periods of concern about the country's future. This is inherent in the diverse nature of the Canadian federation.

But the record shows that in the face of such concern, Canadians have been able to bridge their differences and find the necessary solutions.

The Government of Canada will promote the unity of the country very vigorously. It intends to launch a series of national policy initiatives that will help enhance national unity and respond to the economic and social needs of all Canadians.

A strong economy based on the objective of regional equity will foster a commitment to a united Canada.

The Government of Canada will remain dedicated to the policies of sound economic growth it has pursued since 1984.

- It will continue to work to reduce inflation.
- It will hold to its program of fiscal consolidation.
- It will continue to pursue its program of structural reforms to build a more efficient and competitive economy.

On economic policy, as in other areas, the Government of Canada will continue to collaborate with all provincial Governments for the benefit of Canadians in all parts of the country.

Now is not the time to launch a new constitutional initiative; before we try again we will have to assess the way we go about constitutional reform in Canada.

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COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

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TO/A ALL MISSIONS/TOUTES LES MISSIONS

DELIVER BY 250800

---MEECH LAKE ACCORD: STATEMENT BY FINANCE MINISTER MICHAEL WILSON/

L ACCORD DU LAC MEECH: RAPPORT PAR MINISTRE DES FINANCES MICHAEL WILSON

THE FOLLOWING PRESS RELEASE ISSUED 24JUN BY FIN DEPT CONTAINS FIN

MINISTER WILSON'S VIEWS ON THE MEECH LAKE ACCORD. MISSIONS ARE

ENCOURAGED TO USE THE CONTENTS OF THE PRESS RELEASE, ALONG WITH MEDIA

LINES TELEXED EARLIER, IN THEIR CONTACTS WITH LOCAL MEDIA, GOVERNMENT AND

BUSINESS LEADERS. IN THE EVENT OF QUESTIONING ON HIGHLY TECHNICAL OR

SENSITIVE MATTERS NOT COVERED IN THE WILSON RELEASE OR IN THE LINES,

QUESTIONERS SHOULD BE REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING OFFICIALS AT DEPT

OF FINANCE:

MICHEL CARON, ASSOCIATE DEPUTY MINISTER 992-0910/992-0910;

NICK LEPAN, ADM, 992-6843/992-6843.

FOLLOWING FOR USE BY MISSIONS IS THE TEXT OF THE PRESS RELEASE

CONTAINING MR WILSON'S STATEMENT.

2. QUOTE: STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE ON THE MEECH LAKE ACCORD

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, THE HON MICHAEL WILSON, EXPRESSED HIS

DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE MEECH LAKE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM PROPOSAL

HAS FAILED. WHILE THIS IS REGRETTABLE, THE FAILURE TO RATIFY THE ACCORD

AS THE PRIME MINISTER NOTED, WAS NOT THE FAILURE OF CDA. INDEED, WHILE

UNANIMITY WAS REQUIRED, THE MEECH LAKE ACCORD HAD BEEN APPROVED BY THE

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FEDERAL PARLIAMENT AND EIGHT OF CDAS 10 PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURES,
REPRESENTING 94 PER CENT OF THE CDN POPULATION.

3. AS THE PM NOTED, BEFORE ANY NEW CONSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVE IS LAUNCHED,
THE PROCESS TO ACHIEVE CONSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL IN CDA WILL HAVE TO BE
RE-ASSESSED. IN THIS REGARD MIN WILSON NOTED THAT THE RECORD SHOWS THAT,
IN THE PAST, CDNS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BRIDGE THEIR DIFFERENCES AND FIND
THE NECESSARY SOLUTIONS.

4. FINANCE MIN WILSON ALSO EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF BALANCING ANY
UNCERTAINTY FROM THE LACK OF PROGRESS AT CONSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL WITH
A CLEAR APPRECIATION OF THE MANY POSITIVE ELEMENTS IN THE ECONOMIC
STRUCTURE AND PERFORMANCE OF THE CDN ECONOMY AND THE SOUND ECONOMIC
POLICIES THE GOVT IS PURSUING.

5. THE GOVT OF CDA REMAINS DEDICATED TO THE POLICIES OF SOUND ECONOMIC
MANAGEMENT IT HAS PURSUED SINCE 1984:

-IT WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TO REDUCE INFLATION AND IMPROVE CDAS
COMPETITIVENESS.

-IT WILL HOLD TO ITS PROGRAM OF FISCAL CONSOLIDATION.

-IT WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE ITS PROGRAM OF STRUCTURAL REFORM TO BUILD
A MORE EFFICIENT AND COMPETITIVE ECONOMY.

6. MR WILSON NOTED THAT THE SOUND ECONOMIC FUNDAMENTALS IN CDA SHOULD
BE KEPT IN SIGHT. CDA HAS RICH ECONOMIC POTENTIAL. BASED UPON IMPRESSIVE
PHYSICAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES:

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-ITS 26 MILLION PEOPLE HAVE BUILT THE WORLDS FIFTH LARGEST INDUSTRIAL ECONOMY,AND HAVE ACHIEVED ONE OF THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF LIVING IN THE WORLD.

-SINCE 1984,CDA HAS BEN ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING ECONOMIES:OUTPUT HAS EXPANDED AT AN ANNUAL PACE OF 3.7 PER CENT AND EMPLOYMENT HAS GROWN AT A 2.7 PER CENT ANNUAL RATE.

-INVESTMENT,AS A SHARE OF THE ECONOMY (GDP),IS THE HIGHEST IN OUR HISTORY,AND CDA HAS EXPERIENCED AN UNPARALLELED INVESTMENT BOOM OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS.

-THE RATE OF GROWTH OF THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX HAS BEEN REDUCED FROM APEAK NEAR 6 PER CENT IN 1989 TO 4.5 IN MAY OF THIS YEAR,ALTHOUGH UNDERLYING UNIT LABOUR COST PRESSURES HAVE YET TO SHOW A SIMILAR DECLINE.GOV'T POLICY WILL BE TO CONTINUE TO REDUCE INFLATIONARY PRESSURES IN ORDER TO ENHANCE CDAS COMPETITIVENESS.

7.MIN WILSON STRESSED THAT THE GOVT OF CDAS PROGRAM OF FISCAL CONSOLIDATION IS WORKING AND WILL BE CONTINUED IN THE FISCAL YEAR JUST ENDED,1989-90,THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS DEFICIT WAS 29.5 BILLION DLRS, 1 BILLION DLRS LESS THAN WAS FORECAST IN THE FEB 1990 BUDGET.THIS WAS THE FOURTH YEAR IN A ROW THAT WE CAME IN UNDER OUR PROJECTION.

-THE GOVTS FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS WERE 3.1 PER CENT OF GDP IN 1989-90; AS A PROPORTION OF GDP,THEY HAVE BEEN MORE THAN HALVED SINCE 1984-85, AND THE GOVERNMENT S MEDIUM TERM FISCAL PLAN CALLS FOR A SURPLUS BY 1994-95.

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-GROWTH IN GOVERNMENT SPENDING ON ALL PROGRAMS HAS BEEN HELD TO 3.6 PER CENT ON AVERAGE OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS, LESS THAN THE INFLATION RATE; IT WILL RISE BY ONLY 3 PER CENT IN 1990-91 AND THIS RESTRAINT ON SPENDING WILL BE MAINTAINED IN FUTURE YEARS.

-GROWTH IN THE PUBLIC DEBT HAS BEEN BROUGHT ROUGHLY IN LINE WITH THE GROWTH IN THE ECONOMY, AND A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN THE GOVERNMENT DEBT-TO-GDP RATIO IS CALLED FOR OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS IN THE GOVERNMENT'S FISCAL PLAN.

8. MR WILSON ALSO EMPHASIZED THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO STRUCTURAL REFORM, AND THE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS THAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED SINCE 1984. MAJOR ECONOMIC REFORMS THAT ARE ALREADY IN PLACE, OR ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED, INCLUDE: THE CANADA-US FREE TRADE AGREEMENT; INCOME TAX REFORM; PRIVATIZATION OF MORE THAN 20 GOVERNMENT CORPORATIONS OR AGENCIES; DEREGULATION OF THE ENERGY AND TRANSPORTATION SECTORS; SALES TAX REFORM, AND LABOUR MARKET REFORM (THE LABOUR FORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY). THESE POLICIES ARE ESTIMATED TO RAISE CANADA'S GROWTH POTENTIAL IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 1990S FROM ABOUT 2 3/4 PERCENT TO ALMOST 3 1/2 PER CENT.

9. IN CONCLUDING, MR WILSON STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS MADE CLEAR AND SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN PURSUING ITS ECONOMIC POLICIES OF FISCAL CONSOLIDATION, INFLATION REDUCTION AND STRUCTURAL REFORM SINCE 1984, AND AND THE COMMITMENT TO THESE POLICIES REMAINS UNALTERED.

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FUTURE PROGRESS WILL FURTHER ENHANCE CANADA S COMPETITIVENESS AND
GROWTH POTENTIAL.UNQUOTE./

J. Fieldhouse

PRESS RELEASE BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE
ON THE
MEECH LAKE ACCORD

The Minister of Finance, the Honourable Michael Wilson, expressed his disappointment that the Meech Lake constitutional reform proposal has failed. While this is regrettable, the failure to ratify the Accord, as the Prime Minister noted, was not the failure of Canada. Indeed, while unanimity was required, it is important to note that the Meech Lake Accord had been approved by the federal Parliament and eight of Canada's ten provincial legislatures, representing 94% of the Canadian population.

As the Prime Minister noted, before any new constitutional initiative is launched, the process to achieve constitutional renewal in Canada will have to be reassessed. In this regard, Mr. Wilson noted that the record shows that, in the past, Canadians have been able to bridge their differences and find the necessary solutions.

Finance Minister Wilson also emphasized the importance of balancing any uncertainty resulting from the lack of progress at constitutional renewal with a clear appreciation on the many positive elements in the economic structure and performance of the Canadian economy and the sound economic policies the government is pursuing.

The Government of Canada remains dedicated to the policies of sound economic management it has pursued since 1984:

- It will continue to work to reduce inflation and improve Canada's competitiveness.
- It will hold to its program of fiscal consolidation.
- It will continue to pursue its program of structural reform to build a more efficient and competitive economy.

Mr. Wilson noted that the sound economic fundamentals in Canada should be kept in sight. Canada has rich economic potential, based upon impressive physical and human resources:

- Its 26 million people have built the world's 8th largest industrial economy, and have achieved one of the highest standards of living in the world.
- Since 1984, Canada has been one of the fastest growing economies: output has expanded at an annual pace of 3.7% and employment has grown at a 2.7% annual rate.

Investment, as a share of the economy (GDP), is the highest in our history, and Canada has experienced an unparalleled investment boom over the past four years.

The rate of growth of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has been reduced from a peak of near 6% in 1989 to 4.5% in May of this year although underlying unit labour cost pressures have yet to show a similar decline. Government policy will be to continue to reduce inflationary pressures in order to enhance Canada's competitiveness.

Minister Wilson stressed that the Government of Canada's program of fiscal consolidation is working and will be continued:

In the fiscal year just ended, 1989-90, the public accounts deficit was \$29.5 billion, \$1 billion less than was forecast in the February 1990 budget --- the fourth year in a row we came in under our projection.

The government's financial requirements were 3.1% of GDP in 1989-90; as a proportion of GDP, they have been more than halved since 1984-85 and the government's medium-term fiscal plan calls for a surplus by 1994-95.

Growth in government spending on all programs has been held to 3.6% on average over the last 5 years, less than the inflation rate, and it will rise by only 3% in 1990-91; this restraint on spending will be maintained in future years.

Growth in public debt has been brought roughly in line with the growth in the economy, and a significant reduction in the government debt-to-GDP ratio is called for over the next five years in the government's fiscal plan.

Mr. Wilson also emphasized the government's commitment to structural reform, and the significant progress that has been achieved since 1984. Major economic reforms that are already in place, or are being implemented, include: the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement; income tax reform, privatization of more than 20 government corporations or agencies; deregulation of the energy and transportation sectors; sales tax reform and labour market reform (the Labour Force Development Strategy). These policies are estimated to raise Canada's growth potential in the first half of the 1990's from about 2 3/4% to almost 3 1/2%.

In concluding, Mr. Wilson stated that the government has made clear and substantial progress in pursuing its economic policies of fiscal consolidation, inflation reduction and structural reform since 1984, and the commitment to these policies remains unaltered. Future progress will further enhance Canada's competitiveness and growth potential.

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TO/A SPEECH ADDRESSEES/DESTINATAIRES DE DISCOURS

---NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY PM TO THE NATION/NOTES POUR UNE
ADRESSE A LA NATION

NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS TO THE NATION BY PRIME MINISTER BRIAN
MULRONEY OTTAWA JUNE 23, 1990

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

QUOTE ON JUNE 9, HERE IN OTTAWA, THE 10 PROVINCIAL PREMIERS AND
I REACHED AN AGREEMENT ON MAKING THE MEECH LAKE ACCORD PART OF
CANADAS CONSTITUTION. ALL OF US AGREED TO IMPROVE MEECH LAKE
IN RESPONSE TO CONCERNS THAT HAD BEEN EXPRESSED OVER THE PAST
THREE YEARS BY WOMEN, NORTHERNERS, MINORITY LANGUAGE GROUPS AND
ABORIGINAL CANADIANS.

2. THE PREMIERS OF NEW BRUNSWICK, MANITOBA AND
NEWFOUNDLAND AGREED TO USE EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT TO ARRIVE AT A
DECISION ON THE MEECH LAKE ACCORD BY JUNE 23. ON JUNE 15, THE
NEW BRUNSWICK LEGISLATURE PASSED THE ACCORD UNANIMOUSLY. AND
IN THE TWO WEEKS SINCE JUNE 9, MANITOBA TRIED TO OVERCOME
PROCEDURAL OBSTACLES AND ADOPT THE ACCORD. THE THREE MANITOBA
PARTY LEADERS SPOKE IN FAVOUR OF THE AGREEMENT. WITH MORE
TIME, THERE APPEARED TO BE EVERY PROSPECT THAT THE ACCORD WOULD
BE PASSED.

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3. HOWEVER, YESTERDAY EVENING, THE LAST REMAINING HOPE THAT THE ACCORD WOULD BE RATIFIED WAS DASHED WHEN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR ADJOURNED WITHOUT A VOTE. THIS ACTION MEANS THAT THE CURRENT ROUND OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM HAS COME TO AN END.

4. TODAY, WE MUST GUARD AGAINST TWO DANGERS. FIRST, TO DESPAIR THAT ANYTHING CAN BE DONE AND, SECOND, TO DELUDE OURSELVES THAT NOTHING HAS HAPPENED.

5. IN SAYING YES TO CANADA IN THE 1990 REFERENDUM, QUEBECERS WERE PROMISED A RENEWED FEDERALISM. BUT THE CONSTITUTION ACT OF 1992 WAS NOT ACCEPTED BY QUEBEC BECAUSE IT DID NOT RESPOND TO THE EXPECTATIONS RAISED IN 1990. IN PARTICULAR, IT DID NOT RECONCILE THE NEED TO PRESERVE THE DISTINCTIVENESS THAT QUEBEC BRINGS TO CANADA WITH THE NEED TO PRESERVE THE EQUALITY OF ALL PROVINCES AND ALL CANADIANS.

6. THE MEECH LAKE ACCORD WAS DESIGNED TO BRIDGE THOSE REALITIES. I BELIEVE SINCERELY THAT IT WAS IN THE INTEREST OF ALL CANADIANS THAT IT BE RATIFIED. BUT THE OUTCOME IS CLEAR; WE HAVE FALLEN SHORT OF THE UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUIRED AND THE ACCORD HAS NOT PASSED.

7. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT CANADIANS UNDERSTAND WHY THIS HAS HAPPENED. THE ACCORD, WHICH WAS DRAFTED TO ACHIEVE UNITY,

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BECAME OVER 3 YEARS A LIGHTNING ROD FOR DISCONTENT ABOUT BUDGETS, INTEREST RATES, FREE TRADE AND TAXES. IT ATTRACTED ACCUSATIONS OF FAVOURITISM AND SENTIMENTS OF REJECTION AND STIMULATED REGIONAL RIVALRIES AND LINGUISTIC TENSIONS.

8. MUCH OF THE DISCONTENT OF CANADIANS FOUND EXPRESSION IN HOSTILITY TO THE MEECH LAKE ACCORD. ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSE, AS AGREED TO BY THE PREMIERS IN EDMONTON IN 1986 WAS ONLY TO BRING QUEBEC BACK INTO THE CONSTITUTIONAL FAMILY. BUT THE ACCORD CAME TO BE EXPECTED TO RESPOND TO ALL THE CONSTITUTIONAL PREOCCUPATIONS OF THE COUNTRY.

9. THAT WE DID NOT SUCCEED IS, AT LEAST PARTLY, ALSO THE FAILURE OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDING PROCEDURES. UNDER THE 1982 PROCEDURES, THE PREMIERS AND I WERE REQUIRED TO RE-OPEN NEGOTIATIONS AND REPRODUCE UNANIMITY EVERY TIME A NEW PROVINCIAL LEADER WAS ELECTED WHO CHOSE NOT TO HONOUR THE UNDERTAKING OF HIS PREDECESSOR. OR, IN THE CASE OF NEWFOUNDLAND, WHEN A NEW PREMIER WAS ELECTED WHO CHOSE TO RESCIND THE APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS LEGISLATURE.

10. BUT, WE HAD CREATED AN HISTORIC CONSENSUS AROUND THE ACCORD AND, BY PERSEVERING CAME VERY CLOSE TO MAINTAINING IT. IT WAS ENDORSED BY 10 PROVINCIAL PREMIERS REPRESENTING 4 DIFFERENT POLITICAL PARTIES. IT WAS APPROVED BY EIGHT

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PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURES REPRESENTING 94 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION -- AND THE THREE POLITICAL LEADERS OF THE 9TH PROVINCE HAD PUBLICLY COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO PASSING IT. IT WAS PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON TWO SEPARATE OCCASIONS, BY OVERWHELMING MAJORITIES.

11. DESPITE ALL THIS EFFORT, WE HAVE MISSED AN OPPORTUNITY TO TURN THE PAGE AND TO START A NEW CHAPTER OF CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT. WHILE THE WORLD BEARS UP FOR THE 21ST CENTURY, WE HAVE FAILED TO RESOLVE A DEBATE THAT PREDATES CONFEDERATION ITSELF. THAT IS WHY I AM SO DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED THAT THIS ATTEMPT AT CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM HAS FAILED.

12. TO OUR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS ABROAD, I URGE THAT THIS SITUATION BE KEPT IN PERSPECTIVE. CANADIANS HAVE ALWAYS OVERCOME CHALLENGES TO OUR UNITY AND WE SHALL DO SO AGAIN. WITH A POPULATION THAT TOTALS ONLY 25 MILLION, WE HAVE BUILT THE EIGHTH MOST POWERFUL ECONOMY IN THE WORLD, WITH ONE OF THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF LIVING AND ONE OF THE BEST QUALITIES OF LIFE. IT WOULD BE UNWISE FOR ANYONE TO UNDERESTIMATE THIS INDUSTRIOUS AND RESOURCE-RICH NATION OF HARD-WORKING AND PRODUCTIVE PEOPLE.

13. CANADAS ECONOMIC PROSPECTS CONTINUE TO BE AMONG THE MOST EXCITING AND PROMISING OF ANY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD. THE

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GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE POLICIES DESIGNED TO FULFIL THAT PROMISE.

14. TO MY FELLOW QUEBECERS I WANT TO SAY HOW DISMAYED I AM THAT QUEBEC HAS NOT, AT THIS TIME BEEN ABLE TO REJOIN THE CONSTITUTIONAL FAMILY WITH QUOTE HONOUR AND ENTHUSIASM UNQUOTE. BUT QUEBEC EMERGED FROM THESE NEGOTIATIONS WITH ITS DIGNITY AND ITS PRINCIPLES INTACT. QUEBEC WAS NEVER ISOLATED AND, IN FACT, WAS A MEMBER OF THE MAJORITY THROUGHOUT. QUEBEC'S CONCERNS AS ELOQUENTLY STATED BY PREMIER BOURASSA, WERE SUPPORTED TIME AND TIME AGAIN BY ENGLISH-SPEAKING PREMIERS WHOSE SENSITIVITY WAS ALWAYS IN EVIDENCE.

15. FOR SEVEN LONG DAYS, 10 PROVINCIAL PREMIERS AND I STRUGGLED TO FIND THE BASIS OF REINTEGRATING QUEBEC INTO THE CANADIAN CONSTITUTIONAL FAMILY. HOWEVER, WE WERE NOT SUCCESSFUL AND THERE ARE POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS FOR CANADA -- BECAUSE ACTIONS DO HAVE CONSEQUENCES.

16. THE DEBATE OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT CANADA HAS CHANGED PROFOUNDLY... AND ITS OUTCOME SIGNALS AN ERA OF FURTHER CHANGE. TODAY IS NOT THE DAY TO LAUNCH NEW CONSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES. IT IS A TIME TO MEND DIVISIONS, AND HEAL WOUNDS AND REACH OUT TO FELLOW CANADIANS. THERE IS MUCH TO REFLECT ON BEFORE WE TRY AGAIN TO AMEND THE

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CONSTITUTION. ONE THING IS VERY CLEAR; WE SIMPLY MUST FIND A BETTER WAY TO DO IT. IN THE COMING MONTHS AND YEARS, WE MUST FIND A WAY TO RECONCILE THE NEED FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND OPEN DEMOCRATIC PROCESS WITH THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS NOW IN THE CONSTITUTION.

17. I DO NOT HIDE FROM YOU MY GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE SETBACK CANADIANS HAVE SUFFERED TODAY. BUT THERE IS NO DISHONOUR IN HAVING TRIED TO OVERCOME A SERIOUS THREAT TO OUR UNITY. NO ACHIEVEMENT IS POSSIBLE WITHOUT GREAT EFFORT. SUCH EFFORT ALWAYS CARRIES WITH IT THE RISK OF FAILURE. BUT I WOULD RATHER HAVE FAILED TRYING TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF CANADA'S UNITY THAN TO HAVE SIMPLY PLAYED IT SAFE, DONE NOTHING OR CRITICIZED FROM THE SIDELINES. TO GOVERN IS TO CHOOSE. TO LEAD IS TO RUN THE RISK OF FAILURE. WE DID NOT SUCCEED BUT THE FAILURE TO RATIFY THE ACCORD WAS NOT THE FAILURE OF CANADA.

18. CANADA IS NOT A NATION OF DEFEATISTS ... AND THIS IS NOT A GOVERNMENT OF QUITTERS. WE WILL ALL BE BACK AT WORK NEXT WEEK. WE WILL IMPLEMENT AN AGENDA OF NATIONAL POLICY INITIATIVES TO RESPOND TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PRIORITIES OF CANADIANS. WE WILL INITIATE PROGRAMS TO BRING CANADIANS TOGETHER AND BRIDGE THE SOLITUDES IN WHICH SO MANY ENGLISH AND FRENCH-SPEAKING CANADIANS STILL LIVE.

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19. THERE IS MORE TO THIS COUNTRY THAN CONSTITUTIONAL PAPERS; CANADA IS MORE -- MUCH MORE -- THAN DRY PARCHMENT LYING IN A DRAWER IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES. CANADA IS OUR INHERITANCE FROM OUR PARENTS AND OUR LEGACY TO OUR CHILDREN. CANADA IS ADMIRERD AND RESPECTED AROUND THE WORLD. I AM NOT PREPARED TO GIVE UP ON ALL OF THAT -- OR ANY OF THAT.

20. DESPITE THIS SETBACK, DESPITE THIS GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT, THE IDEA OF A TRULY UNITED, GENEROUS AND TOLERANT CANADA ENDURES. AND WILL, EVENTUALLY, PREVAIL. THANK YOU AND GOOD AFTERNOON. UNQUOTE.

A VERIFIER AU MOMENT DE L ALLOCUTION

21. CIT LE 9 JUIN, ICI A OTTAWA, LES PREMIERS MINISTRES PROVINCIAUX ET MOI NOUS ETIONS ENTENDUS POUR QUE L ACCORD DU LAC MEECH DEVIENNE UNE PARTIE DE LA CONSTITUTION DU CANADA. NOUS AVIONS TOUS CONVENU DE L AMELIORER DE MANIERE A REPONDRER AUX PREOCCUPATIONS EXPRIMEES AU COURS DES TROIS DERNIERES ANNEES PAR LES FEMMES, LES CITOYENS DU NORD, LES GROUPES MINORITAIRES DE LANGUE OFFICIELLE ET LES AUTOCHTONES. LES PREMIERS MINISTRES DU NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK, DU MANITOBA ET DE TERRE-NEUVE AVAIENT CONVENU DE TOUT METTRE EN OEUVRE AFIN QU UNE DECISION SUR L ACCORD DU LAC MEECH PUISSE ETRE PRISE AVANT L ECHEANCE DU 23 JUIN.

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22. LE 15 JUIN, L'ASSEMBLEE LEGISLATIVE DU NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK A ADOPTE L'ACCORD UNANIMEMENT. ET AU COURS DES DEUX SEMAINES ECOULEES DEPUIS LE 9 JUIN LE MANITOBA A ESSAYE DE SURMONTER DES OBSTACLES DE PROCEDURE POUR L'ADOPTER. LES CHEFS DES TROIS PARTIS POLITIQUES DU MANITOBA ONT PARLE EN FAVEUR DE L'ACCORD. LES CHANCES QU'IL SOIT ADOPTE SEMBLAIENT PRES BONNES POURVU QUE L'ASSEMBLEE LEGISLATIVE MANITOBAINNE DISPOSE DE PLUS DE TEMPS. MAIS, HIER SOIR, L'ESPOIR QU'IL Y AIT L'ACCORD PUISSE ETRE RATIFIE A ETE ANEANTI QUAND L'ASSEMBLEE LEGISLATIVE DE TERRE-NEUVE ET DU LAPRADOR A AJOURNE SANS TERNIR DE VOTE. CETTE ACTION SIGNIFIE LA FIN DE CETTE RONDE DE REFORME CONSTITUTIONNELLE.

23. NOUS DEVONS MAINTENANT NOUS PREMUNIR CONTRE DEUX DANGERS : CELUI D'ABANDONNER TOUT ESPOIR ET CELUI DE NOUS CREER L'ILLUSION QUE NOUS POUVONS CONTINUER COMME SI RIEN NE S'ETAIT PASSE. LES QUEBECOIS ONT DIT OUI AU CANADA LORS DU REFERENDUM DE 1980 PARCE QU'ON LEUR AVAIT PROMIS UN FEDERALISME RENOUVELE. MAIS LE QUEBEC N'A PAS ACCEPTE LA LOI CONSTITUTIONNELLE DE 1982 PARCE QU'ELLE NE REPONDAIT PAS AUX ATTENTES SOULEVEES EN 1980. EN PARTICULIER, ELLE NE CONCILIAIT PAS LE BESOIN DE PRESERVER LE CARACTERE DISTINCT QUE LE QUEBEC CONFERE AU CANADA AVEC LA NECESSITE DE MAINTENIR L'EGALITE DE TOUTES LES PROVINCES ET D'

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TOUS LES CITOYENS CANADIENS. L ACCORD DU LAC MEECH AVAIT ETE CONCU POUR CONCILIER CES REALITES. JE CROIS SINCEREMENT QUE SA RATIFICATION AURAIT ETE DANS LE MEILLEUR INTERET DE TOUS LES CANADIENS. MAIS LE RESULTAT EST EVIDENT : NOUS N AVONS PAS OBTENU LE CONSENTEMENT UNANIME REQUIS ET L ACCORD N A PAS PASSE.

24. IL EST IMPORTANT QUE LES CANADIENNES ET LES CANADIENS COMPRENENT POURQUOI CELA S EST PRODUIT. L ACCORD QUI VISAIT A PROMOUVOIR L UNITE, EST DEvenu EN TROIS ANS, POUR BEAUCOUP DE GENS, UN PRETEXTE POUR MANIFESTER LEUR INSATISFACTION A L EGARD DES BUDGETS, DES TAUX D INTERET, DU LIBRE-ECHANGE ET DES TAXES. IL A DONNE LIEU A DES ACCUSATIONS DE FAVORITISME OU A DES SENTIMENTS DE REJET ET IL A ATTISE LES RIVALITES REGIONALES ET LES TENSIONS LINGUISTIQUES. LEUR HOSTILITE ENVERS L ACCORD DU LAC MEECH A ETE POUR BIEN DES CANADIENS UNE FACON D EXPRIMER LEUR MECONTENTEMENT A L EGARD DES MESURES IMPOPULAIRES PRISES PAR LE GOUVERNEMENT.

25. L OBJET INITIAL DE L ACCORD, COMME EN AVAIENT CONVENU LES PREMIERS MINISTRES PROVINCIAUX A EDMONTON EN 1986, ETAIT LA REINTEGRATION DU QUEBEC DANS LA FAMILLE CONSTITUTIONNELLE. MAIS ON EN EST VENU A ATTENDRE DE LUI QU IL REPONDE A TOUTES LES PREOCCUPATIONS CONSTITUTIONNELLES DU PAYS.

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NOTRE INSUCCES EST AUSSI, AU MOINS EN PARTIE. L'ECHEC DES
MECANISMES DE MODIFICATION DE LA CONSTITUTION. PAR SUITE DES
PROCEDURES ETABLIES EN 1982. LES PREMIERS MINISTRES PROVINCIAUX
ET MOI DEVIONS ROUVRIER LES NEGOCIATIONS ET RECREER L'UNANIMITE
CHAQUE FOIS QU'ETAIT ELU DANS UNE PROVINCE UN PREMIER MINISTRE
QUI CHOISSAIT DE NE PAS HONORER L'ENGAGEMENT DE SON
PREDECESSEUR. OJ, COMME CE FUT LE CAS A TERRE NEUVE, QUAND
ETAIT ELU UN PREMIER MINISTRE QUI CHOISSAIT DE REVOQUER L'
APPROBATION DONNEE PAR LA LEGISLATURE PRECEDENTE.

26. MAIS NOUS AVONS CREE UN CONSENSUS HISTORIQUE AUTOUR
DE L'ACCORD ET, A FORCE DE PERSEVERANCE, SOMMES VENUS BIEN PRES
DE LE MAINTENIR. L'ACCORD A ETE SIGNE PAR DIX PREMIERS
MINISTRES PROVINCIAUX REPRESENTANT QUATRE PARTIS POLITIQUES
DIFFERENTS. IL A ETE APPROUVE PAR LES ASSEMBLEES LEGISLATIVES
DE HUIT PROVINCES REPRESENTANT 94 PERCENT DE LA POPULATION DU
PAYS. ET LES TROIS LEADERS POLITIQUES DE LA NEUVIEME PROVINCE S'
ETAIENT PUBLIQUEMENT ENGAGES A LE FAIRE ADOPTER. IL A ETE
ADOPTE PAR LA CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES A DEUX OCCASIONS DISTINCTES,
CHAQUE FOIS PAR UNE TRES FORTE MAJORITE DES VOIX.

27. MALGRE TOUS CES EFFORTS, NOUS AVONS RATE UNE
OCCASION DE TOURNER LA PAGE ET D'OUVRIR UN NOUVEAU CHAPITRE DE
NOTRE EVOLUTION CONSTITUTIONNELLE. AU MOMENT OU LE MONDE SE
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PREPARE A ENTRER DANS LE 21E SIECLE, VOUS N AVONS PAS SU CLORE UN DEBAT QUI REMONTE AVANT LA CONFEDERATION ELLE-MEME. C EST POURQUOI JE SUIS SI PROFONDEMENT DECU QUE CETTE TENTATIVE DE REFORME DE LA CONSTITUTION AIT ECHOUÉ.

28. J INVITE INSTAMMENT NOS AMIS ET PARTENAIRES DE L ETRANGER A CONSIDERER LA SITUATION DANS SA JUSTE PERSPECTIVE. NOUS, CANADIENS, AVONS TOUJOURS SURMONTE DANS LE PASSE LES OBSTACLES A NOTRE UNITE. ET NOUS LE FERONS ENCORE. AVEC UNE POPULATION D A PEINE 26 MILLIONS, NOUS AVONS BATI UN PAYS DONT L ECONOMIE SE CLASSE AU HUITIEME RANG DES PLUS PUISSANTES DU MONDE ET QUI JOUIT D UN DES PLUS HAUTS NIVEAUX ET D UNE DES MEILLEURES QUALITES DE VIE AU MONDE. IL SERAIT MAL AVISE POUR QUICONQUE DE SOUS-ESTIMER LE POTENTIEL D UN PAYS AUSSI RICHEMENT POURVU DE RESSOURCES QUE LE NOTRE, ET DE SA POPULATION, FORMEE DE TRAVAILLEURS PRODUCTIFS ET INDUSTRIEUX. LES PERSPECTIVES ECONOMIQUES DU CANADA DEMEURERONT PARMY LES PLUS INTERESSANTES ET LES PLUS PROMETTEUSES AU MONDE ET LE GOUVERNEMENT VA CONTINUER D APPLIQUER DES POLITIQUES DESTINEES A REALISER TOUT CE POTENTIEL.

29. JE VEUX DIRE A MES CONCITOYENS DU QUEBEC A QUEL POINT JE SUIS DESOLE QUE LE QUEBEC N AIT PAS PU, CETTE FOIS-CI, REINTEGRER LA FAMILLE CONSTITUTIONNELLE DANS CIL L HONNEUR ET L

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ENTHOUSIASME FINCI. MAIS IL SORT DE CES NEGOCIATIONS EN AYANT GARDE SA DIGNITE INTACTE ET SANS AVOIR LE MOINDREMENT DEROGE A SES PRINCIPES. LE QUEBEC N A JAMAIS ETE ISOLE; EN FAIT, IL A ETE PENDANT TOUT CE TEMPS UN MEMBRE DE LA MAJORITE. SES POSITIONS, EXPRIMEES ELOQUEMMENT PAR LE PREMIER MINISTRE BOURASSA, ONT MANTES FOIS RECU L APPUI DE PREMIERS MINISTRES ANGLOPHONES QUI SE SONT TOUJOURS MONTRÉS SENSIBLES A SES PREOCCUPATIONS.

30. PENDANT SEPT LONGUES JOURNEES. LES DIX PREMIERS MINISTRES PROVINCIAUX ET MOI NOUS SOMMES EFFORCES DE TROUVER UNE FORMULE QUI PERMETTRAIT DE REINTEGRER LE QUEBEC DANS LA FAMILLE CONSTITUTIONNELLE CANADIENNE. MAIS NOS EFFORTS ONT ECHOUE ET CELA POURRAIT AVOIR DE SERIEUSES INCIDENCES POUR LE CANADA, CAR TOUTE ACTION A DES CONSEQUENCES. LE DEBAT DES TROIS DERNIERES ANNEES A DEMONTRÉ QUE LE CANADA A PROFONDEMENT CHANGE ET NOUS ALLONS ENTAMER UNE ÈRE DE CHANGEMENTS ENCORE PLUS PROFONDS. CE N EST PAS LE TEMPS MAINTENANT DE LANCER DE NOUVELLES INITIATIVES CONSTITUTIONNELLES. C EST LE TEMPS DE CONCILIER NOS DIFFERENDS, DE PANSER NOS PLAIES ET DE TENDRE LA MAIN A NOS CONCITOYENS.

31. IL Y A BEAUCOUP DE CHOSES AUXQUELLES IL NOUS FAUDRA REFLECHIR AVANT D ENTREPRENDRE A NOUVEAU DE MODIFIER LA

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