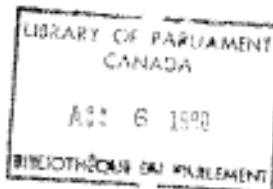


MEETING OF THE CONTINUING COMMITTEE
OF MINISTERS ON THE CONSTITUTION

SENATE

Statement by
The Honourable Jean Chrétien



Montreal, Quebec
July 8-11, 1980

STATEMENT BY
THE HONOURABLE JEAN CHRETIEN
CONTINUING COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS ON THE CONSTITUTION

SENATE

My opening remarks on this item will be brief, because the federal government has not elaborated a specific proposal which it wishes to lay before the meeting at this time. I would, however, like to make a few general comments.

Should reform of the Senate be contemplated, a new upper house could be designed to perform a number of different roles. It could be constituted as:

- o an instrument of intergovernmental co-ordination;
- o a vehicle for expressing national consensus outside exclusive federal jurisdiction;
- o an instrument of participation in the formulation of national policies.

The B.C. proposal represents one such example.

We think that the first matter to be discussed is the role such an upper house might play. This consideration of its role should be in close relation to some of the other constitutional changes being considered, in particular those relating to the division of powers. The more that powers reside in the provinces the more concern we would have about provincial participation in federal institutions such as an upper house, and vice versa.

Once a consensus has been reached on the the institution's role and function we might then proceed more easily to consideration of its powers and composition.