

DISCUSSIONS WITH PREMIERS RE "PATRIATION" OF CONSTITUTION

P.E.I. - Premier Campbell - July 2nd, 1975

Meeting with Premier Campbell - 3:45 - 6:30 p.m.

Only Frank Carter and self present.

Presentation - Reminded Mr. Campbell of discussion at Prime Minister's dinner on April 9 and letter of April 19. Told him of visits in chronological order and of positions taken.

Discussion - Premier Campbell said he had three points to make:

1. He had no objection whatever to the patriation proposal on the basis of the amending formula of Victoria. If the "Western provinces" could agree to drop the "majority of the population" principle, that was up to them.

2. He agreed with Premier Regan that, if some "constitutional guarantees" were to go in for Quebec, there had to be something on the regional disparity problem. However, he felt the Victoria formulation was inadequate as it really created no clear and enforceable obligation on the federal government. He thought there should be a specific commitment to ensure a level of services for citizens in all parts of the country at a reasonable level of cost. In reply to a question from me, he said that the present arrangements (equalization + other income transfers + shared cost programs) would probably meet the obligation he had in mind. His point was that there was no requirement imposed on future government to maintain such programs.

3. There should not be any conferences or any commitments to proceed unless and until it was clear that Premier Bourassa would really go ahead. He asked when I had seen him (I said about May 28) and commented that some 10 days ago in St. Andrew's Mr. Bourassa had stressed the problems of the present timing (strikes, social unrest, Olympics, etc.) and had said he didn't need another problem now. I expressed surprise and referred to Mr. Bourassa's comment: "If we can't do it when Pierre is in Ottawa and I am here, I do not know when we can do it."

I asked Mr. Campbell about some specific points:

- a) The Supreme Court: Mr. Campbell would prefer to have the provision (Victoria) included

- b) Constitutional Guarantees: He had sympathy with Mr. Bourassa's point and saw no objection in principle to guarantees. He would want to look at the text.

We had a good deal of discussion on the question of "going ahead". I told Mr. Campbell that I thought he could be sure the Prime Minister would want to be confident of Quebec's intentions before going far. I said it was by no means sure any conference would be required. The exercise could possibly be handled solely by bilateral discussions.

The matter was left that both Mr. Campbell and we would think about something more specific than Victoria for regional (or provincial) services.