



Name of Publication Nom de la publication

Date

Toronto Globe & Mail

AUG 25 1975

Alerts other governments to formal stand

Bourassa wants cultural guarantees in new

BNA Act

By RICHARD CLEROUX,
 Globe and Mail Reporter

MONT GABRIEL, Que. Premier Robert Bourassa yesterday laid down some pre-conditions before the federal Government and the other provinces get too keen on drawing up a new constitution for Canada.

He told about 300 people at a Quebec Liberal Party weekend think-in on the future of Quebec in the 1980s that any new constitution would have to give the Quebec Government final say over matters of culture, language, communications and immigration affecting Quebecers, before the Quebec Government would accept it.

Mr. Bourassa said later during an interview this has been his position for some time but he wanted to make a formal stand on the matter before the other Canadian Governments got carried away with the idea of a Made-in-Canada constitution. The last constitutional conference, held in Victoria in June, 1971, ended in failure largely because Quebec insisted on final control of its social services.

The constitution—called the British North America Act—has been in the hands of the British Parliament since it was passed in 1857.

Mr. Bourassa said he agrees with Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau that Canada is probably the only country whose constitution is still in another country.

He agreed with Mr. Trudeau and Ontario Premier William Davis that it was desirable that Canada have its own constitution and the power to change it itself, but he said Quebecers must first have guarantees in the constitution that they won't have to rely on a future federal Government to protect French culture and language in Quebec.

Mr. Bourassa said he has nothing against the present federal Government. "In fact, the present federal Government has perhaps done more for French than any other Government before it, how-

ever, we can't judge things by the men but by the structures. That's why we want guarantees.

"Who knows if in 15 years a successor of Mayor Leonard Jones might not replace Ger-

ard Pelletier. Things might be a little different then.

"It won't be easy, but we can't allow that the leader of another government could take decisions affecting the cultural future of Que-

beckers." Mr. Jones, the former mayor of Moncton and now an Independent Member of Parliament who has been a controversial figure over bi-

lingual issues in Moncton, has said in the past that he is not opposed to bilingualism but to the way the federal Government tries to implement it throughout the country. Mr. Pelletier is the Minister of Communications.

The premier wouldn't answer directly whether his proposal meant a special status for Quebec—something that has traditionally angered the rest of the country.

"All I can say is that I see with difficulty how the Quebec Government could not but be implicated and I believe that this Government should have the final decision in matters affecting culture."

At present, Quebec has effective control over much of its culture and is sharing jurisdiction with Ottawa in mat-

ters of immigration and communications.

Although the federal Government has jurisdiction over the entry of immigrants, Canadian citizenship and issuing passports, during recent years it has allowed Quebec to have Provincial Immigration Ministry officials in five Canadian offices abroad. The Quebec officials don't have the final say over who comes over, but they talk to potential immigrants and tell them what it's like in Quebec and what they should expect if they choose to come to Quebec.

The current discussion under way between the two Governments is aimed at increasing the number of Quebec officials working abroad on immigration matters. Mrs. Bourassa refused to say whether Quebec would demand the final say over who can settle in Quebec.