

September 4th, 1975.

c.c. Mr. Gravelle
Mr. Hurley

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. CARTER

Memorandum by Gilles Dufault
on Cultural Sovereignty

See the attached memorandum from Gilles Dufault of the PMO covering a memorandum of July 31st that he sent to the Prime Minister. As you will see, Dufault really has two suggestions:

- (a) That we should try to submit for the Prime Minister's approval a "definition of cultural sovereignty".

I see no merit or attraction in this idea whatever. Mr. Bourassa is having enough difficulty himself with a definition and I should think that he would like nothing better than to see the problem shifted somewhere else. We would certainly be exposing ourselves to all the criticisms in the world if we were to take this on. I am not quite clear what the Prime Minister's comment means in relation to this, but I doubt if he intends support for the proposal.

- (b) That we should develop something on the ways in which Quebec already exercises or can exercise "a certain cultural sovereignty".

It is possible that something could be done with regard to this. I am not at all sure, however, how profitable it would be. I suspect that it would not come as news to anyone that Quebec has established Radio Québec, Office du film du Québec, etc. A much more impressive

thing might be some outline of the actions that the federal government has taken to strengthen and develop the French language and the French culture. While that might be reasonably positive, I doubt however that it would add very much to the discussion that Mr. Bourassa has raised.

You will note in the memorandum some reference to a discussion by Dufault with "Marc" (presumably Marc Lalonde). He apparently has expressed some interest in "a document on the question" for Quebec Ministers to have before the end of September. I can see that they might, for purposes of discussion, want to have some kind of a briefing on the problems that are involved in the various positions that have been taken by the Government of Quebec on "cultural sovereignty". This would, however, be something totally different from the kinds of things to which Dufault refers. I would not want to see us doing a lot of work on anything of this kind before we knew for sure that Ministers do in fact want something and just what it is they want.

While I do not think that Dufault's suggestions are on the right track, this may be the occasion to consider just what the best position for the federal government and Ministers might be in dealing with this particular debate. I do not have in mind at this point the question of the position that ought to be taken with regard to "constitutional guarantees" as part of the "patriation" exercise. I have in mind rather the question of the position that should be taken in public discussion.

Dufault suggests, on page 2 of his memorandum, that the definition of "cultural sovereignty" would force people "to make a choice" or at least would "polarize them around a choice". He implies that this is the right course. I very much doubt if it is. It seems to me that a much better line is to try to blunt the debate, to get people thinking about the things that can be done for the strengthening of French culture in Canada by both the federal and the provincial levels of government (see the editorial by Gilles Boyer in *Le Soleil* of the other day) and provide the provincial

government with an opportunity to slide away from this particular slogan if it can do it. We had a precedent for the present situation in the strong position taken by the Government of Quebec, Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Castonguay on social policy at the time of the Victoria Conference. It has proved possible to move away from the rigidity and sharpness of the confrontation through positive measures that people regarded as sensible. There is no steam in the issue any more, no-one has had to back down, and a constructive result has emerged. It seems to me that this is the profitable course, not one of forcing a choice or a polarization.

The two things that Mr. Bourassa has mentioned specifically are communications and immigration. If he wants to say too much on these matters in precise terms as a part of "patriation" we may have trouble. On the other hand, it is not impossible that, if a bit of time can be secured and if some fairly positive steps can be taken, the heat may be taken out of the debate and it may be possible to arrive at a conclusion based on facts and common sense rather than on precise legal definition.

Could you please take a look at the attached material and give this matter some thought. We might then have a word as to what best to do.

I am sending copies of this to Pierre Gravelle and Jim Hurley for any comments they may have.

Original signed By
Original signé par
R.G. ROBERTSON

R.G.R.

le 2 septembre 1975
CONFIDENTIEL

MEMORANDUM A M. GORDON ROBERTSON

De: Gilles Dufault

Sujet: Souveraineté culturelle

A la suggestion du Premier ministre, je vous fais parvenir copie d'une note que je lui adressais le 31 juillet dernier sur la souveraineté culturelle.

Ce thème encore mal défini, risque à mon avis, d'être le principal sujet d'affrontement entre le Québec et Ottawa au cours des deux prochaines années. C'est pourquoi j'ai suggéré que l'on prenne l'offensive. Qu'en pensez-vous? Est-ce possible de préparer quelque chose pour les ministres du Québec à ce sujet?

Gilles Dufault
G.D.