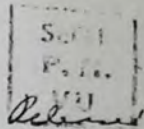


R. G. Robertson

CONFIDENTIAL

September 14th, 1978.



SEP 18 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRIME MINISTER:

Private letter to Premier Blakeney on
procedures about federal-provincial meetings

In the discussion that you had with Otto Lang, Marc Lalonde and me the other day, Marc suggested that the proposed private letter from you to Premier Blakeney should go to him alone and that there should not be copies to the other Premiers. You thought this might be the wise course and, since then, we have given it further consideration and have had another discussion with Mr. Lalonde. There is general agreement that there should be a private letter and that it should be for Premier Blakeney only.

One advantage in sending the letter to Premier Blakeney alone is that it may well be more effective on the whole than if copies go to other Premiers.. Mr. Blakeney will realize that you are communicating with him in a special and personal way and he is likely to take this both as a compliment and as imposing a greater obligation on him. He is likely to use his influence as chairman of the group of provincial Premiers in the next twelve months in a way that he would not be quite so inclined to do if he thought that all were getting something that was, in a sense, a "circular letter".

A further advantage in the private communication is that it is less likely to leak and, if it does leak, it will be less open to criticism than if it were a letter that had gone to all the Premiers. A letter to all might be attacked as being a ploy: a private letter to Mr. Blakeney alone can hardly be so attacked.

When you and I discussed this kind of a letter a week or so ago, you asked me to consider whether it might be possible to include in it some reference to



the position taken by the Premiers at the meeting at St. Andrews in August 1977 and the way they had, at Regina, not followed up on their good intentions about guaranteeing linguistic rights in education. On looking into the record of the St. Andrews meeting, and the subsequent one in Montreal in February of this year, I am sceptical whether it would be wise to make any reference to this matter at all.

At the St. Andrews meeting, the Premiers did not accept the Lévesque proposals about agreements but all they agreed to collectively was a "best efforts" commitment. The relevant paragraph of their statement read:

"The Premiers agree that they will make their best efforts to provide instruction in education in English and French wherever numbers warrant."

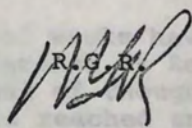
In February, in Montreal, they went a stage further but not very far:

"The Premiers reaffirm their intention to make their best efforts to provide education to their English or French speaking minorities, and in order to ensure appropriate levels of services, they also agree that the following principles should govern the availability of, as well as the accessibility to, such services:

- (i) Each child of the French-speaking or English-speaking minority is entitled to an education in his or her language in the primary or the secondary schools in each province wherever numbers warrant
- (ii) It is understood, due to exclusive jurisdiction of provincial governments in the field of education, and due also to wide cultural and demographic differences, that the implementation of the foregoing principle would be as defined by each province."

As you will see, they did not talk in terms of "rights" nor in terms of any "guarantees" of rights. I am dubious, therefore, if they can be reproached for not having been positive about linguistic rights in our charter.

Attached herewith is a revised draft of the proposed letter from you to Mr. Blakeney. The main revision you may want to note from the earlier version is the final paragraph which suggests that you would "welcome a chance to talk (to Premier Blakeney) about this matter". I think this would be helpful if you were prepared to say it. It would undoubtedly lead to Premier Blakeney taking the whole approach more personally and more seriously.

R.G.B.


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