

S e c r e t

February 12th, 1979.

Possible motion for introduction in the
House of Commons on the constitution

Moved by the Prime Minister, seconded by
that this House:

Note the progress made in the recent constitutional conferences with Premiers of the provinces and in meetings of the Continuing Committee of Ministers on the Constitution in the achievement of a high degree of consensus on matters stated by the provinces to be of priority for them with respect to the distribution of powers and in other matters of concern to both the federal and the provincial governments in Canada;

Record its view that it is of great importance in the national interest that steps be taken at the earliest date to provide a new constitution for Canada as the basis for a renewal of our federation to meet urgent problems of national unity, regional alienation and economic disparity between different parts of Canada and for the better protection of the basic rights of Canadians, including language rights;

Note that, after repeated efforts since 1927, it has not been possible to achieve unanimity among the federal and provincial governments on a procedure for the amendment of those parts of our constitution that cannot now be amended in Canada and that, as a consequence, action has not yet been taken to transfer the complete control of the constitution to Canada under appropriate arrangements to permit all changes in our constitution to be made in Canada;

and that this House, therefore, agree:

2. Secret

1. That the Prime Minister of Canada hold a third Conference on the Constitution with the Premiers of the provinces to achieve as complete a consensus as is possible on the matters that have been under discussion since October, 1978, including a fair and reasonable formula for the amendment of the constitution of Canada;

2. That following that Conference the government present to this House a Bill for change in those parts of our constitution that can now be amended under the powers accorded to Parliament by section 91(1) of the British North America Act and also a Joint Address to Her Majesty praying that a measure be laid before the Parliament of Great Britain to make such other changes in our constitution as may have achieved unanimous agreement or a high degree of consensus at the third Conference on the Constitution and to transfer complete control of the constitution of Canada to this country under procedures for amendment that may have achieved a high degree of consensus at the Conference; and

3. That action be taken through the Continuing Committee of Ministers on the Constitution to prepare for discussion, at the third Conference on the Constitution and at further Conferences, of other areas of constitutional change until a complete renewal of the Constitution of Canada has been achieved.