My dear Prime Minister,

I have now had an opportunity to provide to most of my colleagues or their representatives an overview of our meeting of October 13, 1981. In general, I can say that the Premiers found much that was positive and of interest in my brief outline of our meeting. Full consultation on our conversation will take place at the meeting of Premiers on October 19. At this time I can report to you that the Premiers are hopeful than an agreement can be reached among governments to resolve in Canada the Constitutional issue through negotiation and compromise, in a manner consistent with the decision of the Supreme Court.

Accordingly, my colleagues have asked me to indicate that they are prepared to meet with you at a First Ministers' Conference. At our meeting in Montreal on October 19, the Premiers will be discussing the format and substance of the proposed First Ministers' Conference on the Constitution. This will allow for a full exchange of views among the Premiers on the complex matters you and I discussed yesterday.

At the same time, the Premiers will be reviewing the status of the proposed First Ministers' Conference on the Economy that you were unable to agree to at our meeting of September 24.

Given the range of issues that must be discussed, the Premiers think that our deliberations in Montreal might very well extend to two days. I have related to them, as you advised me, that your own travel plans will take you to Mexico as of Wednesday, October 21. The Premiers are of the view that it would be neither prudent, nor practicable, nor conducive to agreement to schedule a Conference for next week.

I wish to assure you, Prime Minister, of the Premiers' strong desire to dispose of the Constitutional issue promptly and in a manner consistent with the Supreme Court decision. Accordingly, following next week's Premiers' meeting, I shall be in a position to outline for your consideration specific dates and proposals for the First Ministers' Conferences.

Sincerely,

William R. Bennett.