

CONFIDENTIAL

*D. Cameron*

*c.c. Eddie Goldstein*

October 2, 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KIRBY

Provincial Reaction/Constitution - October 2

Main developments today involve Premiers Bennett, Hatfield, Blakeney, and, of course, the vote of Quebec's National Assembly.

B.C. (Bennett)

After meeting Lyon today, Bennett refused to comment on PM's statement that the Charter would not be dropped; "it would serve no purpose to respond to statements made some thousands of miles away."

The B.C. Premier said it was clear that the PM had second thoughts in Melbourne about "unilateralism" - the main threat now to bargaining.

No indication was given of what compromises the provinces would consider, but Bennett re-stated the need of conciliatory attitudes on both sides.

On the Charter, the following was attributed to Bennett after his meeting with Lyon: "Premier Lyon is the greatest nation-builder I know...the Supreme Court has said Lyon was right and thank God for Premier Lyon."

New Brunswick

After a two-hour meeting over lunch with Premier Bennett yesterday in Fredericton, Premier Hatfield indicated that he was not changing his position on the constitutional matter. He would accept to attend a First Ministers' Conference on the issue but he is not very enthusiastic about it. He would, however, definitely not participate in a conference with the eight dissenting Premiers.

Mr. Hatfield reaffirmed his views on the need for: patriation, a Charter of Rights with guarantees for French and English language rights, and equalization. He insisted

- 2 -

on the need for a Charter of Rights in particular, arguing that he had fought hard to have as much as possible in the Charter and that he was not prepared to give it up in return for nothing. He revealed that he had talked to Mr. Chrétien and that he was assured that the Charter would not be bargained away in an attempt to get the support of the dissenting provinces. However, Hatfield did not dismiss the possibility of changes being made to the Charter.

Although Hatfield's position remains essentially unchanged, one can find in his remarks indications that he would be open to negotiations. 1) He conceded that the decision of the Supreme Court "imposes a need for a greater sense of compromise." 2) He also indicated that whatever the final vote in Parliament on the issue, he would respect it.

Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan is puzzled over the Prime Minister's most recent comments which are interpreted as relatively aggressive given the Court's decision. Blakeney is convinced that the Court decision is sufficient to prevent the federal government from acting unilaterally. Thus, there should be an incentive for a return to the table.

Should negotiations take place, Saskatchewan 1) would likely argue initially for mere patriation coupled with an amendment formula (Blakeney's personal preference) although 2) it would likely settle for the inclusion of a Charter (perhaps unchanged) in exchange for agreement on an amendment formula along the lines of the April proposal of the eight provinces.

In a press conference just concluded (3:00 p.m.) Messrs. Bennett and Blakeney both stressed their desire to settle the most pressing aspects of the constitutional question - in order to allow early address of the economic situation.

They also said:

- the court decision has shown the way toward the resolution of the debate
- renewed and immediate negotiations are needed.

Blakeney said that although a broad package might be agreed upon, a more realistic objective would be to agree to seek patriation and an amendment formula which has the approval of

- 3 -

a consensus of governments. He also made it clear that negotiations should begin before any positions, no matter how tentative, are announced by governments.

Both premiers played down the Resolution of the Québec National Assembly, stating that it amounted to a call for negotiations.

Le QUEBEC

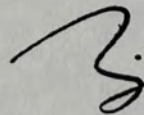
L'Assemblée nationale a pris le vote:

POUR	111
CONTRE	9

N'ont pas voté: Jacques Parizeau (retenu à Ottawa)  
Le président de l'Assemblée.

Ont voté contre: Michel Gratton  
Lucien Caron  
Joan Dougherty  
John O'Gallagher  
John Ciaccia  
Cosmo Maciocia  
Clifford Lincoln  
Richard French  
Bill Cusano

A la sortie de l'Assemblée, Claude Ryan a dit que des mesures disciplinaires seraient prises dans les semaines à venir, mais il a ajouté qu'il faudrait voir à cela cas par cas, en tenant compte des régions que représentent les députés et de leur adhésion à toutes les autres politiques du parti. Il a dit qu'on avait grandement exagéré les divisions qui existent dans son parti.



Liaison

Walter Zyla