

T R A N S L A T I O N

(February 12, 1970)

My dear Prime Minister,

We have just received an invitation from President Diiori Hamani of Niger to participate in the founding conference of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation among francophone countries. The conference is scheduled to begin March 16. I am enclosing a copy of the invitation. The President has also arranged for the documentation (of several hundred pages), prepared for this conference by the staff of the Agency's Provisional Secretariat under the direction of M. Jean-Marc Léger, to be distributed to prospective member countries. We received this documentation last week and immediately forwarded it to you.

We are thus left with only a few weeks to study these texts; to initiate consultations between us, with the other provinces and with francophone countries; and to work out our positions, especially on the political and financial issues raised by this documentation. Moreover, as Canada's support of and contribution to the Agency will probably be an important factor in its success, it is up to us not to give our francophone friends the impression that the issue is a subject of controversy in Canada as this might prove detrimental to the establishment of the Agency. It therefore seems to me to be a matter of urgency that we come to agreement on the arrangements on the role of the Quebec government within Canada's participation in the Agency.

Since the beginning of January, our officials have been discussing this matter. I have, as well, had an opportunity to consider the statements you made to the press on January 28 in which you described your government's attitude to the role Canada will play in the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation. Your preoccupations in this respect seem to parallel those of the Canadian government; that is, to ensure an important role for the Quebec government, while respecting the unity of the country.

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The Honourable Jean-Jacques Bertrand
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