

Appendix

The suggestion advanced by you that the procedure for bringing about a full discussion of this subject be left for settlement by the conference itself is satisfactory to the government of this province.

The other question arising from your letter has reference to the proposal that a general conference be held early in the autumn of 1950 to discuss other questions of common concern to the dominion and the provinces. I have discussed this suggestion with my colleagues and am in a position to advise you of our willingness and desire to attend such a conference.

It is generally recognized that there are various subjects of common interest which could be discussed to advantage at a general conference between the federal and provincial governments. One could readily instance several of them.

If the provinces generally will undertake to participate in discussions of this nature we shall welcome the opportunity to take part in such a conference. It is obvious that much good may come from such studies if all parties approach them in a cooperative attitude and with a desire to find solutions to problems of real concern to the people of Canada.

I assume that it will be known shortly whether or not the proposal for holding this conference has the support of the provinces generally. Should arrangements for it be proceeded with, we will gladly give consideration to the questions and subjects which might constitute the agenda.

Yours sincerely,

John B. McNair

THE PREMIER
New Brunswick

Fredericton, November 12, 1949

Right Hon. Louis S. St. Laurent,
Prime Minister of Canada,
Ottawa, Canada.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I wish to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of November 7, advising that January 10 next has been definitely set for the opening of the conference on constitutional matters.

I wish to assure you again that this province will be represented at that time.

Yours sincerely,

John B. McNair

PROVINCE OF MANITOBA
Office of the Premier

Winnipeg, December 23, 1949

Right Hon. Louis S. St. Laurent, P.C., K.C.,
Prime Minister of Canada,
Ottawa, Canada.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

This will acknowledge your letter of December 7 last.

In our letter of October 6 last, accepting your invitation to attend the federal-provincial constitutional conference I made it clear that the government of Manitoba realizes that a conference such as this will be dealing with difficult and complex constitutional problems, and that progress towards a solution of them can be made by representatives of Canada and the provinces meeting together. Because of this our government was of the opinion that a preliminary conference comprising constitutional experts, though not necessarily limited to them, would

be useful in clarifying many of the issues involved, and we therefore supported the calling of such a preparatory conference.

It seemed to our government that such a conference could have made progress in discussing some of the constitutional and procedural issues that are certain to arise, and in this way would have been of value to the plenary conference when held—one of its accomplishments perhaps being a suggested agenda for that full conference. Inasmuch, however, as many of the premiers did not feel that such a preliminary meeting would serve any useful purpose, it is probably advisable to leave the matter of an agenda and general procedure to the full conference for final decision. I would assume, however, that your government will prepare a tentative agenda so that the greatest progress possible can be made when the conference assembles. This basis will be satisfactory to the Manitoba government.

The other matter referred to in your letter is the proposal of a general conference to discuss various questions of interest to the federal and provincial governments, including tax agreements. The government of Manitoba will welcome such a conference and will be glad to take part in it, either in September or October, whichever is found to best suit the majority of the participating governments.

Yours sincerely,

Douglas Campbell

PREMIER'S OFFICE
Saskatchewan

Regina, December 10, 1949

Right Hon. Louis S. St. Laurent, K.C.,
Prime Minister of Canada,
Ottawa, Ontario.

My dear Prime Minister:

Thank you for your letter of December 7 in reply to my letter of November 29 regarding an agenda for the conference which is to consider the procedure of amending the constitution of Canada.

Since your government is convening the conference which is to open on January 10, the decision as to whether or not there shall be an agenda lies entirely within your jurisdiction. However, in view of the fact that most of the provincial representatives will be anxious to get back to their respective provinces in order to prepare for the meeting of their legislatures, the Saskatchewan government is of the opinion that a good deal of time could be saved and some useful conclusions more speedily arrived at, if an agenda were drafted setting forth the specific items to be discussed. As an alternative, it may be that the federal government would be prepared to put before the provinces a series of specific proposals for the purpose of discussion on how the constitution of Canada could be amended in respect of dominion-provincial matters.

Your proposal that a general dominion-provincial conference be held early in the autumn of 1950 meets with the complete concurrence of the Saskatchewan government. This is something we have been advocating ever since the previous dominion-provincial conference was adjourned *sine die* on May 3, 1946. When I wrote to you on July 15 last, it was in the hope that your government would see fit to call a general conference this fall. Your reply of August 18 caused us considerable disappointment. You will remember that at that time you said:

"I am not convinced, however, that the best way for us to attempt to discharge that duty is to come together at once in a full-dress dominion-provincial conference."