

Since the Supreme Court hearing has been set back to February 22, I believe that we have yet another chance to review our positions. I am doing so now and hope that Premier Peckford is as well. I have always believed a negotiated settlement is possible and certainly desirable. The federal government remains ready to meet at anytime and in any place to continue discussions on the offshore.

If negotiations or discussions are not resumed prior to a Supreme Court ruling, the federal government will be ready to meet the provincial government immediately upon a court decision regardless of what that decision may be. A legal resolution will not in itself get development under way. Co-operation between governments is necessary no matter who owns the offshore.

I cannot respond to your questions concerning Premier Peckford's attitudes or strategy in negotiations. The federal government would like to have a negotiated settlement as soon as possible because we believe it would be good for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and for all Canadians. Whether an offshore settlement is possible in the near term will not deter my ministers from pursuing all avenues to assist Newfoundlanders in their proud efforts to achieve economic and social progress.

Yours sincerely,
Pierre Elliott Trudeau

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

ST. PIERRE AND MIQUELON—CANADA-FRANCE MARITIME BOUNDARY

Hon. H. A. Olson (Leader of the Government): I have a relatively short response to a question asked by Senator Marshall on November 24 as to whether discussions were held dealing with Canada's position concerning St. Pierre and Miquelon during the Prime Minister's recent visit to France.

Honourable senators, the Prime Minister discussed the Canada-France maritime boundary problem with the President of France during his visit to that country. It was agreed that there be an early resumption of negotiations relating to the St. Pierre and Miquelon situation. It is expected that negotiations will resume before the end of January 1983.

Hon. Martial Asselin: An invasion in the future?

Hon. Jack Marshall: On that particular question, would the Leader of the Government furnish this chamber with a list of those negotiating on behalf of the Canadian and French governments?

Senator Olson: It is my opinion that the ministers are the persons responsible, and I am not sure whether it is the practice to name all those who assist. In any event, I shall take the question as notice.

CANADA POST CORPORATION

DEFINITION OF "LETTER"

Hon. H. A. Olson (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have a response to a question asked by Senator

Roblin on November 24 concerning possible parliamentary debate over the regulation providing the definition of "letter". I ask that this answer be incorporated in *Hansard* as though it had been read.

● (2025)

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it agreed, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(The answer follows:)

The government has not changed its position respecting the confidentiality of correspondence between the Canada Post Corporation and interested parties with regard to the definition of "letter".

The government considers that the procedure being followed by the Canada Post Corporation allows for the protection of the public interest. This process involves the publication of a proposed regulation, public comment, discussion and consultation, amendment by the corporation and submission of the amended version to the Governor in Council. Cabinet has 60 days within which to review and either accept or reject the proposal. In this case, the Governor in Council rejected the proposal which would seem to indicate that the system is working.

Therefore, a full parliamentary debate is not being contemplated at the present moment. Senator Roblin is of course free as a legislator to introduce debate on the subject in the Senate through an inquiry, a motion or even an amending bill should he wish to do so.

ENERGY

PETRO-CANADA—PURCHASE OF BP CANADA

Hon. H. A. Olson (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have a relatively short answer to a question which was asked by Senator Murray on November 24 concerning the relationship between Petro-Canada and the Governor in Council. The question had to do with terms of reference, among other things.

If Senator Murray looks at the Petro-Canada Act, he will find that the role of the Governor in Council is specified in many clauses. In particular, I would encourage him to look at sections 2, 5(2), 7(2), 7(3), 7(4), 7(5), 8(1), 8(2), 8(3), 9(1), 10(2) 11 and 13(1).

Hon. Jacques Flynn (Leader of the Opposition): The answer you are giving is more a legal opinion.

Senator Olson: If Senator Murray, after he has studied all of those sections, which do, in fact, explain in some detail the relationship between the Governor in Council and Petro-Canada, has any further question in his mind I shall be glad to try to answer it.

Hon. Lowell Murray: One is accustomed to the instinctive answers of the smart-alecs who advise the minister on questions that are put in this chamber. One understands less well the tendency of the minister to make himself the echo of or the sounding board for that kind of reply.