

Canada Weekly

Volume 6, No. 35

August 30, 1978



Ottawa, Canada

Premiers reject federal proposals for constitutional reform, 1

Grain and oilseed outlook, 2

Inuit back ban on whale hunting, 3

Law of the sea conference meets in New York, 3

Wood converted to heating oil, 3

EDC helps \$2-billion deal, 3

Anniversary of the foundation of Quebec City, 4

Merrie England in Toronto, 5

Home information system, 5

Language skills for Quebec pilots, 6

Oktoberfest celebrates tenth year, 6

Police reserves in Manitoba, 6

News of the arts — exhibition, dance, 7

Beef prices, 8

News briefs, 8

Premiers reject federal proposals for constitutional reform

At their nineteenth annual conference in Regina, Saskatchewan, August 9-12, Canada's ten provincial premiers opposed major proposals of the Federal Government's document, A Time for Action Towards the Renewal of the Canadian Federation announced on June 12 (see Canada Weekly, dated June 28, Page 1).

The premiers issued the following communique on this subject on August 10:

For many years, provincial governments have shown concern over constitutional issues and have participated actively in a large number of conferences and discussions. As a result of provincial initiatives and leadership, a great deal of useful progress has been made in identifying problems requiring constitutional action, and achieving a greater understanding of their implications. Premiers agreed that the division of powers is the key issue in constitutional reform, and should be addressed in conjunction with other matters.

Need endorsed

1. *The importance of constitutional discussions* — The provinces endorse the need for constitutional reform, to provide the basis for all Canadians to achieve a greater measure of economic and social well-being and cultural fulfilment, and to establish more harmonious relations among governments.

2. *First Ministers' Conference on the Constitution* — The provincial governments therefore look forward to the forthcoming First Ministers' Conference on the Constitution now scheduled for the end of October.

They believe that the conference should be open.

They believe, further, that the agenda must accommodate all proposals, and should be drawn up jointly by the Federal Government and the provinces.

The premiers accordingly have instructed ministers responsible for the Constitution to continue preparatory work, and to invite the federal Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations to meet with them.

3. *Proposals* — In the view of the pre-

miers, important proposals from all sources must be given careful and thorough consideration in the constitutional review process. Some of these proposals are:

- the consensus reached by the ten provincial premiers in October 1976;
- proposals made, or under preparation, by or for federal or provincial governments, such as the report expected from the Task Force on Canadian Unity, co-chaired by Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin and Hon. John Robarts;
- the Federal Government's constitutional amendment bill.

Provinces must all agree

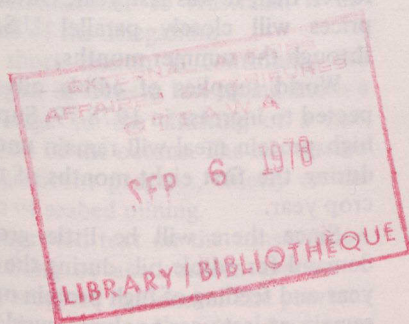
4. *The importance of agreement* — The premiers firmly believe that significant constitutional reform should have the concurrence of all governments, recognizing the equality of status of all provinces in the process.

It is doubtful whether the Federal Government has the legal authority to proceed unilaterally with proposed changes to the Senate and the role of the monarchy. In any event, it would clearly be wrong for them to undertake unilateral action in those or other important areas without provincial support.

Constitutional reform must be part of a process that will improve the well-being of all citizens and strengthen intergovernmental relations.

5. *A comprehensive approach* — It was agreed that discussions on constitutional reform cannot be compartmentalized into artificial divisions. Institutional and jurisdictional problems interact in such a way that they must be considered together.

The premiers agreed that problems involving the distribution of power between the Federal Government and the provin-



One hundred and fourteen years ago Friday...
The first conference on Confederation began in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

Aug. 30/78