

to undermine the foundations of our free and democratic way of life. The protection of society against flagrant abuses of fundamental rights is readily available as long as such rights gain their legal status through enactments of Parliament or the provincial legislatures. The situation would be very different if subversive elements could claim immunity from prosecution on the ground of an entrenched constitutional right.

In your letter you make specific reference to the question of language and the matter of language having an official status. In this matter it is our firm view that no attempt should be made to give official status to the French language by means of a constitutional provision other than the existing guarantee given to the Province of Quebec at the time of Confederation that French will be recognized, together with English, as an official language in Quebec.

The Government of Alberta does not accept the proposition that Confederation was a union of two races and two cultures. We hold the historic fact to be that Confederation was a union of provinces and that in the negotiations leading to Confederation the concept of the union being one of two races, two cultures and two languages was not a factor and certainly was in no sense a condition of the union.

The fallacious concept of relatively recent origin that Confederation was other than a union of provinces has done more to create divisions in Canada than it has to bring about national unity. The fact that almost one-third of Canadians are of neither English or French origin points up the serious disruptive long-range consequences which would result from designating French as a second national official language.

We, therefore, would be opposed to any amendment to the Constitution which would give further credence to a concept which we submit has no validity in history or in fact.

I make these observations at this time because I feel in all fairness you should know the considered opinion of the various provinces when assessing the desirability and possible value of the type of conference you have proposed.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) Ernest Manning  
Premier.

This letter also sent to Premier of Quebec.

[Translation]

Ottawa, November 1, 1967.

My dear Premier,

Needless to say that I am aware of the circumstances which have kept you occupied lately and that I understand quite well why you have been unable to answer immediately my letters of August 15 and September 27.

In those letters, I invited your government as well as those of all the other provinces to a federal-provincial conference whose object would be to consider the principle and terms of a constitutional bill of rights. Most provinces have already answered and I would be quite pleased if you were now in a position to let me know your opinion.

We would like to hold that conference early in 1968, which seems generally acceptable to the other premiers. May I expect to hear from you in the near future?

Yours truly

(Signed) L. B. Pearson

Hon. Louis J. Robichaud,  
Premier of New Brunswick,  
Parliament Bldgs.,  
Fredericton, N.B.

[English]

Similar letters sent to the Premiers of Quebec, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island in English and to the Premiers of Quebec and New Brunswick in French.

Ottawa, September 27, 1967.

My dear Premier:

You may recall that following the discussion I had with you and the Premiers of the other Provinces at my house on July 5th, I wrote you on August 15th to propose and invite you to participate in a Federal-Provincial Conference on a Canadian Constitutional Bill of Rights to be convened early in 1968. I have already received a number of replies but before proceeding further with arrangements for this important meeting, I would appreciate having at an early opportunity an