



# Bulletin

Vol. 24, No. 10

March 5, 1969

## PRIME MINISTER REVIEWS CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

*Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau tabled in the House of Commons on February 1 the final document drafted at the federal-provincial constitutional conference held earlier in the week. Opening the House debate on the conference later in the day, the Prime Minister said that, notwithstanding the divergency of opinions expressed at the conference, a considerable degree of agreement had been reached.*

*Part of Mr. Trudeau's statement follows:*

...I should be less than frank if I did not say that I would have liked the conference to have adopted the federal proposal for an entrenched bill of rights, but I am very pleased that on many subjects we made a great deal of progress. An examination of the documents which I tabled this morning reveals that an impressive number of constitutional items were advanced an appreciable degree. The conference agreed to continue with the constitutional review, and at an accelerated pace; it was affirmed that studies of linguistic questions be undertaken by a committee of ministers; the same proposal was accepted about the item concerning the entrenchment of fundamental rights and liberties in the form of a constitutional charter; the spending power will be examined as will the question of regional disparities; the structure and role of the Senate and Supreme Court, two of the institutions of federalism, were brought into review, and so was the concept of the national capital area, which is one of the very important institutions of federalism.

I believe this shows a remarkable degree of consensus on a large number of questions of considerable importance. There is still another aspect upon which the conference was very successful. I have in mind the opportunity it gave to the people of

### CONTENTS

Prime Minister Reviews Constitutional Conference .....	1
Eskimo Burial Site Found .....	3
Tunis and OECD Meetings .....	3
Canada's Ice Observers .....	4
African Lecture Tour .....	4
Student Exchanges .....	4
Estate and Gift Tax Proposals Modified ..	5
Executive Bus .....	6
New Native Periodical .....	6

Canada to observe on a close and intimate basis the complexities, and the varieties, of the problems which must be taken into account in shaping the future of this vast country. The frank expressions of opinions voiced by the heads of the various provincial governments were a dramatic illustration of just how theoretical and how academic are many of the treatises which purport to explain the constitutions of Canada and which purport to explain the way in which Canada is governed....

This conference established, if there were any need to establish, that all provincial governments are resolved, as is the Federal Government, to improving the economic opportunities of our people. It established that all provincial governments are anxious, as is the Federal Government, to improve the operation of our federal system. It established that all provincial governments are firm, as is this Government, in a commitment to protect fundamental human rights. Of course, agreement has not been reached on the means to achieve this objective, but all heads of government have indicated their willingness to work towards a better protection of human rights. We all acknowledge that the grave difficulties we face are in part the result of oversight, in part the result of errors, but mostly because of our past inability to forecast future events. All omissions, past and present, were made in good faith. There has been perhaps some incapability to solve complex problems in an industrial society which is experiencing a unique type of federalism.