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WEEK'S EVENTS IN REVIEW

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE: The Federal-Provincial Conference on constitutional amendments opened in Ottawa on the morning of January 10, when the Prime Minister, Mr. St. Laurent, speaking in both French and English, welcomed the Premiers of the 10 Provinces and included a special word of greeting to Premier Smallwood of the new Province of Newfoundland.

In his welcoming address, Mr. St. Laurent was quoted as saying: "We cannot afford to permit differences to frustrate the continued development in a desirable direction of the nation as a whole."

Preliminary statements were made by the Provincial Premiers, and, in the course of the opening day's discussions, the Prime Minister indicated that the whole question of constitutional amendment was thrown open to the Conference, and in particular that it would be possible to revise the recent amendment to the British North America Act which gave the federal Parliament power to amend the Act in relation to federal matters.

At the conclusion of the second day's sitting, January 11, the progress of the Conference was summed up by J.A. Hume, in the Ottawa Citizen, as follows:

Considerable solid progress was made at the second day of the Federal-Provincial Constitutional Conference.

The tone of the general clarifying discussion and the whole atmosphere of the Conference continued to be of the friendliest nature. Where divergent views were voiced, always it was done with politeness and deference. Constructive co-operation was maintained throughout as the dominant note of the day's proceedings.

Prime Minister St. Laurent, just before adjournment overnight was taken at 5:30 p.m., summed up the general agreement that had been expressed thus far as to six subjects to be "entrenched" in the constitution to the extent that no future changes therein could be effected without unanimous consent of the ten Provinces.

These subjects Mr. St. Laurent listed as follows: language, education and separate schools, solemnization of marriage, administration of justice, proper representation in both the House of Commons and the Senate, and the life of Parliament to be for five years with a proviso for extension only in an emergency of real or apprehended war.

The Conference named Justice Minister Stuart Garson and the ten provincial Attorneys-General as a committee to put in draft form the generally expressed agreement of the Conference as to dividing the constitution into four or five main parts for purposes of amendment in future.