

APPENDIX

BILL OF RIGHTS—CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO PROPOSED
DOMINION-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

November 14, 1967.

The Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson, P.C.
Prime Minister of Canada,
Government of Canada,
Ottawa.

Confidential

Mr. Prime Minister:

My colleagues and I have taken cognizance of your letter of August 15, 1967 proposing that a special federal-provincial conference be held early next year to consider the possibility of giving Canada a constitutional Bill of rights providing especially a wider definition of and greater guarantees for the official languages.

Quebec has long been wishing that the rights of French in Canada be enlarged and that their observance be guaranteed by the constitution. Consequently, we can only rejoice at any initiative likely to produce such a result and I can assure you of the active participation of our government in the conference you propose.

However, I wish to draw to your attention that the changes that you seem to advocate will be difficult to implement unless the whole constitutional question is considered and resolved. Indeed, it is difficult to see how such a Bill of rights could be included in our constitution before the latter is repatriated. The unfortunate experience of the Fulton-Favreau formula has shown that such repatriation cannot be effected until agreement is reached on the outlines of constitutional reform.

I must add that even if it were possible to guarantee even more fully the rights of French under the constitution, the basic problem concerning Canada's future would still be far from being solved.

Our government deems it necessary to discuss a Bill of rights within the framework of a comprehensive study of our constitutional structures, rather than as a preliminary step to that study, as implied by your letter. Fortunately, the Confederation of tomorrow Conference which will be held in Toronto at

the end of the month, will give us the opportunity to undertake such a comprehensive study, thus enabling us to consider both questions at the same time and to make the necessary parallels.

Finally, I point out that, pursuant to its election platform, our government intends to include in the Quebec constitution a charter stipulating the fundamental rights and essential freedoms of man. As stated in your letter of February 10 last, the provinces do have an obvious interest in the matter.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Johnson

[English]

GOVERNMENT OF NEWFOUNDLAND
AND LABRADOR

THE PREMIER

ST. JOHN'S

August 30, 1967.

Confidential

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson, P.C., M.P.,
Prime Minister of Canada,
House of Commons,
Ottawa.

My dear Prime Minister:

Thank you for your letter setting forth your thoughts on a special Conference to consider the possibility of establishing a constitutional Bill of Rights for Canada. As always, my colleagues and I will do anything within our power to assist you and you may count on our full co-operation in this matter. I stand ready to come to a conference whenever you should choose to call it.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,
Joseph R. SmallwoodPREMIER'S OFFICE
PROVINCE OF
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

September 28th, 1967.

My dear Prime Minister:

I have received your letter of August 15th outlining your proposal for the establishment of a Constitutional Bill of Rights for Canada.