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E.S.T.

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

PRESS RELEASE

Ottawa, October 1, 1947.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Mackenzie King, announced to-day that new Letters Patent governing the office and appointment of the Governor General of Canada had been signed by His Majesty the King on September 8, 1947, and countersigned by the Prime Minister of Canada. The new Letters Patent (the principal document relating to the office of Governor General) come into force on October 1, 1947, and will supersede on that date the existing Letters Patent of 1931 (as amended in 1935) and the Royal Instructions of 1931.

2. The Royal documents relating to the office of Governor General had not undergone a careful revision since 1931. The Canadian Government accordingly recommended to His Majesty the issuance of new Letters Patent consolidating the former documents and bringing them up to date.

3. Apart from textual alterations designed to bring the new Letters Patent into line with constitutional developments and practices in Canada and within the Commonwealth, the principal alterations may be summarized as follows:

(a) By the introductory words of Clause 2 of the new Letters Patent, the Governor General is authorized to exercise, on the advice of Canadian Ministers, all of His Majesty's powers and authorities in respect of Canada. This does not limit the King's prerogatives. Nor does it necessitate any change in the present practice under which certain matters are submitted by the Canadian Government to the King personally. However, when the new Letters Patent come into force, it will be legally possible for the Governor General, on the advice of Canadian Ministers, to exercise any of the powers and authorities of the Crown in respect of Canada, without the necessity of a submission being made to His Majesty. (The new powers and authorities conferred by this general clause include, among others, Royal Full Powers for the signing of treaties, Ratifications of treaties, and the issuance of Letters of Credence for Ambassadors). There will be no legal necessity to alter existing practices. However, the Government of Canada will be in a position to determine, in any prerogative matter affecting Canada, whether the submission should go to His Majesty or to the Governor General.

(b) The new Letters Patent revoke and supersede the existing Letters Patent and the existing Royal Instructions. The Royal Instructions have been incorporated in the new Letters Patent which have been issued under the Great Seal of Canada.

...2