

# News Release

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November 29, 1994

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The following is a translation of a letter addressed to the Deputy Premier and Minister of International Affairs, Immigration and Cultural Communities of Quebec, Bernard Landry, from Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet. This letter, sent today to Mr. Landry, follows his public comments and letter to Mr. Ouellet concerning a speech by Grand Chief of the Quebec Cree Matthew Coon-Come to a recent conference of the American Association of Quebec Studies, in Washington.

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TRANSLATION

November 28, 1994

Mr. Bernard Landry  
Deputy Premier and Minister of  
International Affairs, Immigration and  
Cultural Communities  
525 boul. René Lévesque Est  
Quebec City, Que.  
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Dear Mr. Landry,

Thank you for your letter of November 23 concerning the speech by Mr. Matthew Coon-Come, Grand Chief of the Quebec Cree, to a conference organized by the American Association of Quebec Studies, last week in Washington.

Mr. Coon-Come was invited by the American Association of Quebec Studies, as were your colleague, Mrs. Rita Dionne-Marsolais, and the Canadian Ambassador to Washington, Mr. Raymond Chrétien. Mr. Coon-Come sent the text of his speech to the press on the evening of November 17 and, in the same news release, to the Embassy. At no time did he ask the Embassy to comment on his speech.

Immediately after Mr. Coon-Come's speech, representatives of Hydro-Quebec and the Quebec Government who were present at the conference responded in detail to his remarks. Mrs. Dionne-Marsolais did the same in her speech that evening. You must agree that the public and the press therefore had sufficient information to form an intelligent opinion on the matter.

Mr. Landry, in your letter reason is drowned in a flood of emotion. Surely I do not have to remind you, who, like me, are a minister and as such a defender of the democratic values of our society, that Canadian embassies do not interfere and try to tell Canadians what points of view they should express at university conferences. I assume that the Quebec delegations abroad, which fall under your responsibility, follow the same rule.

I wonder what your reaction would have been if the Canadian Ambassador had asked Minister Dionne-Marsolais not to say anything about Quebec sovereignty, since to do so might offend many Canadians, within Quebec and elsewhere, who do not believe that the Quebec Government has any mandate to talk about separation.

Must I remind you that the Canadian Embassy in Washington is still serving Quebec, be it by promoting its rich cultural heritage, or by defending its interests in regard to free trade, acid rain and lumber, to name but a few?

Finally, you must surely agree that Quebecers are entirely capable of making a valid assessment of this situation.

Yours sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

André Ouellet