



Canada JQ  
cc WSO

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

1 March 1982

I am writing to thank you for your letter of 12 February addressed to the Prime Minister setting out the views of the Government of the Province of Quebec on the Canada Bill now before Parliament.

A. J. COLES

Mr. G. Loiselle



Gouvernement du Québec  
Délégation générale  
de Londres

Le délégué général

12 February 1982

The Rt Hon Mrs Margaret Thatcher MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

Dear Mrs Thatcher,

In the conversations I have had over the past few months with members of both Houses of Parliament, many have expressed the view that British involvement in Canadian constitutional affairs in 1982 is an absurdity and should be brought to an expeditious end. I have always agreed with them.

However, the great difficulty my Government has with the Canada Bill is that it is so far-reaching. Some of it, such as the proposal to 'patriate' the Canadian Constitution, is straightforward and totally acceptable. But the Canada Bill is much more than that.

Enactment of this measure by Westminster will bring about profound and unconstitutional changes in the Canadian Constitution. Moreover, Westminster is being asked by the Canadian Federal Government to enact a measure which is unprecedented in that it does not have the consent of the people of Quebec and yet directly affects their interests. Throughout the 115 years of Canada's history, the unique position of the Quebec people has been protected by both Canadian and British interests by acceptance of Quebec's right of veto.

A major incongruity in the Canada Bill is that it accepts this right of veto for the future, but denies it for the present. For this reason, my Government has asked the Courts to confirm the validity of Quebec's right of veto in the current instance. The Supreme Court of Canada has never ruled on this issue and in its recent judgment on the constitutional issue the Court deliberately avoided making any decision as to the quality of provincial consent as distinct from the quantity of consent.

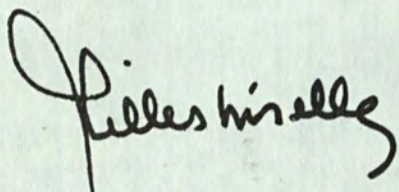
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In these circumstances, the only proper course of action for Westminster is to wait for the Canadian courts' decisions before enacting any measure.

Quebec is far more than just another Canadian Province. The Canadian coat of arms clearly shows that Quebec is half of Canada. The consent of Quebec is essential for any lasting resolution of the constitutional question, and without it the Canada Bill cannot have constitutional legitimacy.

If you have any questions concerning the attached memorandum, I will be happy to answer them or discuss them with you personally.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Gilles Loiselle". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Gilles Loiselle  
Agent-General for Quebec