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Canada

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

14 April 1981

Dear David,

I am writing in response to your recent telephone call following your letter of 12 February about the possibility of transmitting BBC External Service programmes in French to Canada.

Ideally it is desirable that French speaking Canadians should be able to hear BBC broadcasts relating to the Constitutional Question in French. But if a French Service to Canada were to be started at this time, however balanced and well intentioned, there is a very real risk that the Federal Government might see it as smacking of interference in Canada's internal affairs.

In addition, it takes time to build up listenership to a new service, as you will know from your experience with the BBC. By the time a worthwhile French speaking audience had been achieved in Canada, it is to be hoped that the current problem over the Constitution would have been resolved. In these circumstances, and given the pressure on the resources of the BBC External Services in the present economic situation, we shall have to rely on the World Service in English to make our case.

Yours sincerely

David Ginsburg, Esq., M.P.

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