

FROM DAVID GINSBURG, MP

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LCCIG



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

12th February 1981

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Rt. Hon. Mrs. M. Thatcher, MP  
Prime Minister,  
10 Downing Street,  
London,  
S.W.1.

*Dear Prime Minister.*

I hope you do not mind my troubling you with a piece of advice about the vexed problem of the patriation of the Canadian Constitution. Before doing so I should declare an interest. As you know I have broadcast for many years on the French service of the B.B.C., but also for the last few years I have done radio and television programmes for C.B.C./Radio Canada. Most of these programmes have been in the French language and nearly all of them, going back, I think, to 1976, have concerned the hypothetical patriation of the Canadian Constitution. I can modestly claim some knowledge of the subject.

The point I am seeking to alert you on is that though the B.B.C. world service programmes in the English language are picked up in Canada and contain material on the Constitutional issue there is no parallel British output in the French language. In practice this means that though the English speaking population of Canada are in a position to understand the British point of view on this very difficult and sensitive issue, French listeners have no such possibilities as the B.B.C. French service is not beamed to Canada. I believe though, in contrast, the French state does relay some domestic output to Canada for several hours a day.

I am not in any way suggesting that you should mount a propaganda drive, it is simply that the U.K. needs to convey the facts to the people of Canada. I am not a technical expert in transmission matters but I imagine that in an emergency situation we could do something fairly quickly.

If I am right in my judgement this matter could hot up even more in the next few weeks and you may feel that my suggestion has something to commend it.

*Yours Sincerely  
David.*

P.S. This letter is written to you in a helpful spirit and apart from acknowledgement it does not call for a reply on the substantive issue.