

F3-11(1)

cc: Mr. Tassé  
Mr. Gibson  
Mr. Anderson  
File ✓

S E C R E T

April 3, 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. PITFIELD - *destroyed 14/4/81*

The Release of the UK Government's  
Constitutional White Paper

When we discussed this matter yesterday we concluded that it would be to our advantage to press the British government to release its White Paper very soon. After further discussion this morning with the constitutional staff, I suggest we should reconsider our position (which has not yet been discussed with the British because Mrs. Wadd's next appointment with Mr. Pym is not until next Friday).



s.23

- [Redacted]
- The British government can be expected to resist publishing the White Paper in the light of the Newfoundland decision and we may need to exert considerable pressure - and use up goodwill - to get them to proceed (and even then risk failing).
- If it did publish the White Paper, it might find it became an object of debate and criticism in the UK; as you know, there was consideration being given to an adjournment debate in Westminster on the White Paper and such a debate could prove messy in the current context. Hence it might not be in our interest to have the debate focussed on the FCO reply to Kershaw.

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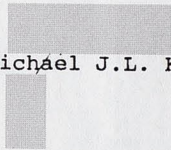
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S E C R E T

- The White Paper is designed to influence British Parliamentarians. It is likely to have its maximum, favourable impact if it comes out just after the Supreme Court has ruled (assuming it is favourable) and about the same time the resolution goes to London. It will help us to build up a head of steam in London at precisely the time we need it.
- Our central objective with the British government should be to ensure rapid action on the bill once the Supreme Court has ruled. A squabble over the White Paper now might not contribute to this.
- There may be advantages, in terms of the short-term effect on Canadian public opinion, arising from the UK government's publishing its White Paper, but they would not be very great. The UK government's position is known and the substance of the White Paper has been reported already. The Quebec court case will be more significant.

We shall need to determine our position by next week, and certainly before Mrs. Wadds sees Mr. Pym (probably next Friday). Please call me so that we can finalize our position.

s.19(1)

  
Michael J.L. Kirby