

Ref. A05932

MR. ALEXANDER

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R. Welles o.g. B.U. 3/12 4/1/82.
You will want to be aware of this. I take the view that Ambassadors & High Commissioners should only see the P.M. when it is really necessary.

Lord Moran, our High Commissioner in Ottawa, came to see me yesterday.

2. Though we talked about many other matters, the main purpose of his visit was to make two points:

- (i) The fact that I had a personal relationship with my Canadian counterpart (as indeed my predecessors have had), and that this channel of communication had been used at certain moments during the affair of the Canadian Constitution, had, he feared, affected his standing as an interlocuteur valable in the eyes of the Canadian Prime Minister.
- (ii) The American Ambassador in Ottawa, before taking up his duties, had had an hour with the President of the United States and was able to refresh this contact when he returned to Washington. He made no secret of the fact; and this naturally improved his standing in Ottawa. By contrast he (Lord Moran) was not able to say that he had seen the Prime Minister either before taking up his appointment or at any time since.

3. I said that there was a tradition of a direct relationship between the Secretary of the Cabinet in London and his counterpart in Ottawa which I had inherited; and I valued that relationship, because it enabled us to discuss together questions about organisation and machinery at the centre of Government, to our mutual advantage. I had also had some dealings with Mr. Pitfield in the course of my work as the Prime Minister's Personal Representative for the purposes of the Economic Summits. It so happened that over recent months I had had a number of contacts with Mr. Pitfield at the time of the Ottawa Summit and then again at CHOGM in Melbourne; and it was perhaps not surprising both that we had discussed the Canadian Constitution and that, particularly at Melbourne, we should have been a channel between the two Prime Ministers. I did not regret that; but I assured Lord Moran that I



regarded this particular matter as exceptional, and had no wish or intention to use the contact with Mr. Pitfield to replace proper diplomatic channels for contacts between the two Governments and the two Prime Ministers in the ordinary course of business.

4. On the second point, I said that I thought that it would be useful if Lord Moran could see the Prime Minister on one of his visits here; she was very busy at the moment, but perhaps something could be arranged next time he was here.

5. I asked whether Lord Moran thought that, once the Canadian Constitutional affair was settled, it might be useful for the Prime Minister to send Mr. Trudeau a personal message, which could be sent through him (Lord Moran). Lord Moran thought that this ought to wait until the legislation at Westminster was safely through, but that such a message at that point could well be a good idea.

RTA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

10th November, 1981