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Foreign and Commonwealth Office
London SW1A 2AH

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26 APR 1984	
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26 April 1984

J N Elam Esq
MONTREAL

Dear Nick,

MR LEVESQUE'S VISIT

1. Thank you for your letter of 11 April. We submitted the telegraphed version to Lady Young who agreed with the Department's view that it behoves us to take a relaxed view of these capers. The FCO have made it clear to all concerned that our door is open to the Premier of Quebec if, accompanied by the Canadian High Commissioner, he wishes to walk through it. Meanwhile, the Quebecers know that Lady Young is happy to meet him socially. But I do not think we want to be seen to be chasing them.
2. We agree of course that the Quebec government's handling of Levesque's contacts here was less than dextrous. Perhaps if there is residual embarrassment in Quebec City, this will encourage those concerned to make an even greater effort for Mr Channon's visit.
3. The Quebecers seem to have succeeded with their aim of keeping Mr Levesque's visit to London in a low key. As far as we are aware it went almost unreported in the British press! We shall be letting you have separately an account of Levesque's performance at the UK/Canada Chamber of Commerce lunch.

Yours ever,
Noel

N H Marshall
North America Department

cc: HE The Lord Moran KCMG
OTTAWA

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TELETYPE

FM R H BAKER ESQ, BHC, OTTAWA

FILE REF: 026/3 DATED 13 APRIL 1984

FOLLOWING FOR: N H MARSHALL ESQ, NAD, FCO

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF A LETTER OF 11 APRIL TO YOU FROM NICK ELAM, OF WHICH ORIGINAL FOLLOWS BY BAG:

BEGINS:-

MR LEVESQUE'S VISIT

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER HAS ASKED ME TO WRITE DIRECT BY THIS BAG TO EXPLAIN THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT'S APPARENTLY BOORISH BEHAVIOUR OVER THE AGENT GENERAL'S INVITATION TO BARONESS YOUNG TO DINE WITH PREMIER LEVESQUE. WE ARE PARTICULARLY ANXIOUS THAT BARONESS YOUNG SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE BACKGROUND.

2. I SAW THE AGENT GENERAL WHEN HE WAS HERE THREE WEEKS AGO AND TOLD HIM WE HAD RECOMMENDED THAT MR CHANNON ACCEPT AN INVITATION TO DINNER IF HE WERE FREE, ADDING, AS THE CONVERSATION DEVELOPED, THAT WE WOULD CERTAINLY SEE NO OBJECTION FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW TO HYNDMAN'S INVITING BARONESS YOUNG ALSO, IF HE WISHED. AS YOU KNOW, WHEN THE HIGH COMMISSIONER PAID HIS FAREWELL VISIT HERE LAST WEEK, LEVESQUE SAID HE WOULD NOT WISH TO CALL ON AN FCO MINISTER ON THIS OCCASION, BUT HE DID NOT RULE OUT AN INFORMAL MEETING OVER THE DINNER TABLE.

3. WHEN THE DIRECTOR FOR EUROPE IN THE QUEBEC MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, GHISLAIN CROFT, SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD ME THAT HYNDMAN HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED NOT (UNDERLINED) TO INVITE BARONESS YOUNG (WITHOUT SAYING LTHAT AN INVITATION HAD ALREADY ISSUED) I EXPRESSED GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT. I SAID WE HAD GONE OUT OF OUR WAY TO TRY AND GIVE SOME ADDED SUBSTANCE TO LEVESQUE'S VISIT, BECAUSE OF OUR DESIRE TO PUT OUR RELATIONS WITH QUEBEC ON A FRIENDLIER FOOTING NOW THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE WAS PAST. THERE WERE RECENT PRECEDENTS FOR PROVINCIAL PREMIERS BEING SEEN BY AN FCO MINISTER (EVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER HERSELF) AND QUEBEC OUGHT TO BE ON THE SAME FOOTING AS THE OTHER PROVINCES. LADY YOUNG WAS VERY INTERESTED IN CANADA AND WOULD BE DISAPPOINTED NOT TO HAVE THE CHANCE TO MEET MR LEVESQUE.

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26 APR 1984

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4. CROFT WAS VERY EMBARRASSED. HE WAS QUICK TO ACKNOWLEDGE - AND APPROVE- OUR EFFORTS TO DO THE RIGHT THING BY QUEBEC. BUT IT HAD BEEN AGREED WITHIN THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT THAT THE VISIT WOULD BE PRIVATE AND WHOLLY CONCERNED WITH ECONOMIC ISSUES, AND THAT LEVESQUE WOULD STEER CLEAR OF THE POLITICAL ARENA. THIS ISSUE WAS DESPERATELY SENSITIVE IN QUEBEC, FOR REASONS THAT I WELL KNEW.

5. THE SAD FACT IS THAT THE QUEBEC MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ARE IN AN EXTREME STATE OF JITTERINESS AS A RESULT OF LEVESQUE'S BEHAVIOUR AFTER HE SAW PRESIDENT PERTINI IN ITALY (WHEN HE TOLD JOURNALISTS THAT PERTINI HAD SAID HE HAD NO TIME FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN OTTAWA). THIS WAS A SEVERE BLOW TO THEIR ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH QUEBEC'S RESPECTABILITY ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE, AND THEY WILL DO ANYTHING TO AVOID A REPETITION. THEY KNOW THAT LEVESQUE WILL BE ASKED AWKWARD, MISCHIEVOUS QUESTIONS BY CANADIAN JOURNALISTS IN LONDON (SEMI COLON) AND THEY DO NOT WANT HIM TO HAVE TO ADMIT THAT HE HAS MET AN FCO MINISTER, EVEN INFORMALLY.

6. THIS IS A GREAT PITY, SINCE IT IS RATHER DIFFICULT FOR US TO NORMALISE RELATIONS WHEN THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT IS IN A STATE OF ABNORMAL NERVOUSNESS AND LACK OF SELF-CONFIDENCE. BUT WE CAN ONLY PROCEED AT THEIR PACE - AND PLEAD THAT THEIR PATHETIC PROBLEMS BE UNDERSTOOD AND THAT THEY BE FORGIVEN THEIR INVOLUNTARY DISCOURTESY TO LADY YOUNG.

ENDS.

SIGNED R H BAKER

NNNN

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British Consulate-General
635 Dorchester Boulevard West
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
H3B 1R6
Telephone: 866-5863

11 April 1984

N H Marshall Esq
North America Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
LONDON

Amc 027/9

26 APR 1984

DESK OFFICER	LISTED
PA	TREAS

@26/4

Dear Noel,

MR LEVESQUE'S VISIT

1. The High Commissioner has asked me to write direct by this bag to explain the Quebec Government's apparently boorish behaviour over the Agent General's invitation to Baroness Young to dine with Premier Lévesque. We are particularly anxious that Baroness Young should be aware of the background.
2. I saw the Agent General when he was here three weeks ago and told him we had recommended that Mr Channon accept an invitation to dinner if he were free, adding, as the conversation developed, that we would certainly see no objection from our point of view to Hyndman's inviting Baroness Young also, if he wished. As you know, when the High Commissioner paid his farewell visit here last week, Lévesque said he would not wish to call on an FCO Minister on this occasion, but he did not rule out an informal meeting over the dinner table.
3. When the Director for Europe in the Quebec Ministry of International Relations, Ghislain Croft, subsequently told me that Hyndman had been instructed not to invite Baroness Young (without saying that an invitation had already issued) I expressed great disappointment. I said we had gone out of our way to try and give some added substance to Lévesque's visit, because of our desire to put our relations with Quebec on a friendlier footing now that the constitutional issue was past. There were recent precedents for Provincial Premiers being seen by an FCO Minister (even by the Prime Minister herself) and Quebec ought to be on the same footing as the other provinces. Lady Young was very interested in Canada and would be disappointed not to have the chance to meet Mr Lévesque.
4. Croft was very embarrassed. He was quick to acknowledge - and approve - our efforts to do the right thing by Quebec. But it had been agreed within the Quebec Government that the visit would be/

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- 2 -

be private and wholly concerned with economic issues, and that Lévesque would steer clear of the political arena. This issue was desperately sensitive in Quebec, for reasons that I well knew.

5. The sad fact is that the Quebec Ministry of International Relations are in an extreme state of jitteriness as a result of Lévesque's behaviour after he saw President Pertini in Italy (when he told journalists that Pertini had said he had no time for the Federal Government in Ottawa). This was a severe blow to their attempts to establish Quebec's respectability on the international scene, and they will do anything to avoid a repetition. They know that Lévesque will be asked awkward, mischievous questions by Canadian journalists in London; and they do not want him to have to admit that he has met an FCO Minister, even informally.

6. This is a great pity, since it is rather difficult for us to normalise relations when the Provincial Government is in a state of abnormal nervousness and lack of self-confidence. But we can only proceed at their pace - and plead that their pathetic problems be understood and that they be forgiven their involuntary discourtesy to Lady Young.

Yours ever,
Nick

J N Elam

cc HE The Lord Moran KCMG
Ottawa.

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Amc 0249
NO. 72

03 APR 1984

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FM OTTAWA 022205Z APR 84

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 201 OF 02 APRIL

INFO SAVING MONTREAL (OTTAWA HAVE PASSED)

INDEX	PA	CLASSIFIED
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Copied to
Mr. Davis Ota/br
@34

FROM HIGH COMMISSIONER IN MONTREAL

MY TELNO 187: VISIT OF QUEBEC PREMIER TO LONDON

1. I SAW RENE LEVESQUE THIS MORNING. I ENCOURAGED HIM TO REGARD OUR 1981 DIFFERENCES ON THE CONSTITUTION AS WATER OVER THE DAM WHICH HE SEEMED ON THE WHOLE DISPOSED TO DO, BLAMING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RATHER THAN HMG, AND TO CONCENTRATE ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT IN HIS SPEECH TO THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

2. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD PREFER NOT REPEAT NOT TO CALL ON A MINISTER AS THIS MIGHT GIVE A POLITICAL DIMENSION TO HIS VISIT WHICH HE PREFERRED TO AVOID. BUT HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO MEET ANY MINISTER SOCIALLY EG. AT DINNER WITH MR HYNDMAN. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES I RECOMMEND THAT IN ADDITION TO LADY YOUNG, MR CHANNON IF POSSIBLE ACCEPT MR HYNDMAN'S INVITATION. MR LEVESQUE IS LIVELY AND AMUSING TO TALK TO AND SPEAKS PERFECT ENGLISH (THOUGH HE SAYS HIS WIFE'S ENGLISH IS SHAKY).

MORAN

LIMITED
NAD
PROTOCOL.D.
TRED
FRD
NEWS.D.
PS
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MR. WHITNEY
PS/PUS
SIR.W. HARDING
MR.D. THOMAS

discussed with Mr Moran
OT2/DT1: Mr Chan
go as he has a
engagement out of
17 April. he will
him to change his
Lamont is willing
place.
Lady Young has

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Closure status: Open
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1) S- for Lady
2) Mr Marshall (MAD)

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FROM: N H Marshall, NAD
DATE: 30 March 1984

May thanks, Lady Young
it happy to do as you
recommend

Mr David Thomas

PS / Lady Young

Stella
(AS/Lady Y) 2/4
Mark

cc: PS/Mr Whitney
Head/Protocol Dept
Mr. Macdonald
Miss Hughes M4/4
3/10

Appt to Ottawa
with refs @ H4

ps. MASH.

Amc 027/9
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04 APR 1984

VISIT OF THE QUEBEC PREMIER TO LONDON

Problem

1. Should Lady Young, or another FCO Minister:
 - (i) receive Mr Lévesque who is paying a private visit to London from 17-19 April;
 - (ii) accept a promised invitation to a dinner in Mr Lévesque's honour to be given by the Quebec Agent-General on 17 April?

Recommendation

2. I recommend that:
 - (i) we should not take the initiative in inviting Mr Lévesque to pay a call at the FCO; but that if a request is received, through Canada House, we should respond favourably;
 - (ii) Lady Young should accept the proposed invitation to the dinner on 17 April.

Protocol Department concur.

Background

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3. In his telegram 187 the High Commissioner in Ottawa has reported that Mr Lévesque will be paying a "private" visit to London from 17-19 April in the course of which he will make a speech to the Canada-United Kingdom Chamber of Commerce, give a press conference and attend a dinner in his honour given by the Quebec Agent-General in London. Lord Moran has recommended that in view of the importance of Quebec and of British interests there we should if possible arrange for him to see Lady Young.

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4. The FCO was already aware of the Premier's visit through informal

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enquiries on procedural matters which the Quebec Agent-General, Mr Hyndman, had addressed to Protocol Department. Among other things, in conversation with Mr Martin Mr Hyndman acknowledged that the proper channel for requests for calls by Quebec Ministers on British Ministers was through the Canadian High Commission. Mr Hyndman also told Mr Martin that he wished to invite Lady Young to the dinner referred to in paragraph 3 above and was told that there was no objection to his sending an invitation direct. Lady Young has said that she would ^{be} prepared to attend.

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5. The Department earlier told the Canadian High Commission that we would take the same view of a visit by the Premier of Quebec as of the Premiers of other Canadian Provinces, namely that we would recommend a courtesy call on a Foreign Office Minister if that were feasible provided that, in accordance with the constitutional position adhered to by the two governments, the request for a meeting was channelled through the High Commission. The Minister of State has since said that she would be prepared to receive Mr Lévesque, and this has been made known informally to Canada House and to the Quebec-Agent General.

(5)
D

Argument

6. The relationship between Ottawa and the Provinces in Canada is a very delicate and often acrimonious one. Although the exceptional constraints of the period of the patriation of the Constitution no longer apply, it is the British Government's policy to keep out of the dispute as far as possible. Mr Lévesque's Parti Quebecois is dedicated to Quebec sovereignty involving political separation from Canada, together with continued association for economic purposes. It is possible that he would be unwilling to make the acknowledgement of Federal Government authority which would be involved in directing a request to call on British Ministers through the Canadian High Commission; and it will not be surprising if we hear no more of this from the Canadian side.

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7. The British interest is to cultivate good working relations with both the Federal Government and the individual Canadian provinces, including Quebec. Indeed it is likely that Mr Paul Channon on his forthcoming visit to Canada will go to Quebec City and meet members of the Quebec Government. However, we must be careful in furthering this relationship not to embarrass either the Quebec Government or the Federal Government. I accordingly think that we should do no more by way of invitation to Mr Lévesque than we have already done, namely to indicate to both parties that subject to the observation of the established procedure we would consider favourably a request for a courtesy call on Lady Young.

8. The same constitutional niceties need not affect attendance at social occasions, and the Canadian High Commission accept this. If Lady Young attends Mr Hyndman's dinner, this will serve the practical purpose of meeting Mr Lévesque without involving the possible political embarrassment of a meeting in the FCO. The Canadian High Commissioner will be attending the dinner.

N H Marshall

N H Marshall

30 March 1984

I agree

David Thomas

30/3

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