
Chronology of Events July 1989—June 1990

Darrel R. Reid

An index of these events begins on page 269

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| 5 July 1989
<i>Meech Lake Accord</i> | Stating his belief that little progress on the Meech Lake Accord can be made at this time, Prime Minister Mulroney cancels a First Ministers' Conference (FMC) on the Accord scheduled for 19 September 1989. Talks on the Accord were expected to resume at an FMC on the economy planned for November. |
| 12 July 1989
<i>Regulation –
Transportation</i> | Prince Edward Island becomes Canada's second province to lose its rail service as the National Transportation Agency approves a bid by CN Rail to abandon its seven freight lines on the island. |
| 13 July 1989
<i>Taxation –
Bankruptcy</i> | The Supreme Court of Canada, in <i>B.C. v. Henley Samson Belair Ltd.</i> , upholds a British Columbia Court of Appeal ruling that a British Columbia tax law giving sales tax collectors first access to assets does not apply in bankruptcy cases. Seven provinces had joined British Columbia on 21 April in arguing that sales taxes are held in trust and cannot be distributed to other claimants in bankruptcy cases. |
| 13 July 1989
<i>Regional
Development –
Newfoundland</i> | The federal government and the Government of Newfoundland sign two separate agreements in St. John's to aid Labrador native communities. The agreements, worth almost \$43 million, are to cover programs and services such as education, water and sewer projects, |

construction and repair of houses, municipal administration and services.

19 July 1989
*Federal-Provincial
Fiscal Relations*

The New Democratic Party releases information obtained from the Finance Department under the Freedom of Information Act showing that provisions in April's federal budget will mean \$2.2 billion less in federal payments to the provinces for post-secondary education and health over the next four years. Under this scenario, Ontario and Quebec are to face the largest cuts as transfer payments fall by \$809 million and \$549 million respectively.

21 July 1989
*Regional
Development -
Newfoundland*

The federal government and the Government of Newfoundland sign two five-year agreements to encourage economic and rural development in Newfoundland. The agreements, worth \$83.3 million, are for improving roads and public services along the coast and supporting rural development associations, cooperatives and other local organizations. The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency will manage both agreements for the federal government, which is to contribute 70 percent of the funding.

25 July 1989
*Agriculture -
Soil Conservation*

The federal government and the governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan sign three-year soil conservation agreements totalling almost \$90 million in Regina. The agreements commit the three governments to share the cost of helping farmers and others both to develop and implement soil conservation practices and to take marginal land out of production.

27 July 1989
*Agriculture -
Drought Aid*

The federal government announces that it has reached cost-sharing agreements for drought aid to stricken farmers with the governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario. Ottawa had insisted that the provinces pay a share of the cost of the \$850 million aid package, announced the previous autumn. The provinces agreed to contribute 25 percent of the costs of the plan in return for a commitment from Ottawa to change crop insurance legislation. Under the new formula, the farmers will still pay 50 percent of the premium, with Ottawa and the provinces splitting the other half as well as administrative costs.

2 August 1989
*Equality Party –
Quebec*

Quebec's Equality Party chooses Robert Libman, a 28-year-old architect, as its first leader. The party supports bilingualism in Quebec and has been campaigning against the Quebec government's French-only sign legislation. In addition, the party opposes the Meech Lake Accord, advocates freedom of expression in the private sector and advocates that Quebecers have the right to education in either official language.

3 August 1989
*Regional
Development –
New Brunswick*

The federal government and the Government of New Brunswick announce that they have reached agreement for a new economic development package. The federal government is to put up \$97.7 million over the next five years to finance five subsidiary agreements under the Economic and Regional Development Agreements (ERDA), with the province contributing \$76.9 million over the same period.

8 August 1989
Taxation – GST

Finance Minister releases a technical paper outlining the details of the government's proposed Goods and Services Tax (GST), scheduled to go into effect 1 January 1991. Under the new tax, almost everything will fall under the proposed 9 percent sales tax, which is to replace the existing 13.5 percent Manufacturers' Sales Tax.

9 August 1989
Elections – Quebec

Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa announces that Quebecers will go to the polls in a provincial election 25 September. According to Bourassa, the election is necessary to give him a strong mandate with which to pursue the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord.

11 August 1989
*Regulation –
Financial
Institutions*

The federal government announces that, effective immediately, it must approve all takeovers of federally-regulated trust and loan companies. Gilles Loiselle, Minister of State, Finance, states that, under legislation to be introduced into Parliament in the fall, the government will have the power to look at such considerations as the size, business plan, skills and experiences of a company or individual wanting to buy control of a trust company and take into account "the best interests of the financial system in Canada."

13 August 1989
Meech Lake Accord
– Quebec

Speaking in an interview on the Télémédia television network Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa states that the Quebec Government has an alternative strategy if the Meech Lake Accord is not ratified before the deadline of 23 June 1990. He does not specify, however, what those "alternative plans" might be.

14 August 1989
Supreme Court;
Regulation –
Telecommunications

In a landmark judgement the Supreme Court, in *Alberta Government Telephones v. CRTC*, rules that the federal government has the constitutional power to regulate all domestic telephone companies. The judgement could lead to Ottawa imposing a single set of rules over the three provincially-owned telephone companies in the prairie provinces and the four investor-owned utilities in the Maritimes.

The case arose when Alberta Government Telephones (AGT) contested the jurisdiction of the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to grant an order to CNCP Telecommunications of Toronto compelling AGT to provide access to its network. The Supreme Court is unanimous in finding AGT subject to federal authority. The Court states in its decision that "AGT's involvement in the transmission and reception of electronic signals at the borders of Alberta are sufficient to mark AGT as an interprovincial, as opposed to a local, undertaking," and places it under federal jurisdiction.

The ruling, according to Federal Communications Minister Marcel Masse, provides the opportunity to establish "a Canadian communications framework that serves the interest of all regions." Consultations with the provinces are to begin shortly.

21-22 August 1989
Annual Premiers'
Conference

Canada's ten premiers meet in Quebec City for their annual conference. During the conference the issue of Meech Lake is not on the agenda and is discussed only briefly. Quebec Premier Bourassa is delegated to discuss with the Prime Minister the possibility of tagging the Meech Lake issue onto the agenda of the 9-10 First Ministers' Conference on the Economy.

Chief among their concerns at the conference is the federal government's plans to implement its Goods and Services tax. The premiers issue a statement expressing

their conviction that the proposed tax is "unacceptable," that it could cause inflation, hurt interest rates, and negatively affect employment and regional development programs. In their final communiqués the premiers urge the federal government to delay any decision on the future of passenger rail services, to increase funding to highways and to tighten control on foreign overfishing in Canadian waters. In addition, the premiers call upon Ottawa to reassess its approach to regional development and to impose stricter limits on automobile emissions, agreeing as well to reduce compounds in gasoline that contribute to smog. The premiers make little progress, however, on the contentious issue of interprovincial trade barriers, agreeing only to investigate the establishment of a dispute-resolution mechanism similar to that in place under the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

22 August 1989
*Interprovincial
Energy Relations –
Hydroelectricity*

Meeting at the premiers conference in Quebec City, the premiers of Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland agree to consider ways of cooperating in the development of new hydro-electric power sites in Labrador. Under the proposal, the provinces will consider three major sites: a project in the Upper Churchill water reservoir, Muskrat Falls and Gull Island. According to Ontario premier Peterson, the cooperation could come in the form of financing, a joint venture or marketing agreements.

31 August 1989
*Regulation –
Environment –
Saskatchewan*

After a court-ordered, five-month review, federal Environment Minister Lucien Bouchard permits the controversial Rafferty-Alameda dam project in southern Saskatchewan to resume under a stricter licence. According to the terms of the licence the federal government attaches 22 "stringent conditions" to ensure that environmental concerns about the \$125 million water project are met. According to Mr. Bouchard, "to the extent that adverse environmental impacts of this project can be reduced to zero, they will be."

11-12 September 1989
Consumer Affairs

Federal and provincial consumer affairs ministers conclude two days of meetings in St. John's, Newfoundland with calls for regulations on the telemarketing industry. The ministers also urge the credit card industry to take further action to break down interest charges as they

appear on bills, so consumers understand where their money is going.

12 September 1989
*Interprovincial
Trade*

Federal and provincial trade ministers meet in Hull, Quebec to discuss lowering interprovincial trade barriers and agree to set up a mechanism to settle disputes on government procurement contracts. They establish a deadline of June 1990 on negotiations aimed at reducing interprovincial barriers to trade in beer, and an agreement on wine trade is said to be close.

22 September 1989
*Regional
Development –
Nova Scotia*

The federal government and the Government of Nova Scotia announce their agreement on the terms of three regional development agreements to replace three of the six ERDA subsidiary agreements that expired at the end of March. The package includes a two-year \$45-million forestry agreement, a two-year \$9-million mineral agreement and a four-year \$8-million fisheries agreement.

25 September 1989
Elections – Quebec

Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa leads his Liberal Party to an impressive victory in a provincial election. The Liberals return 92 members — seven short of the 1985 election results, while the Parti Québécois elects 29, up from 23. The fledgling Equality Party will have four members in the Legislature. The election, expected to be a sleepy affair, changed dramatically with the emergence of several issues during the campaign. Within days of the election call the government ran into a snag disposing of 1,500 tonnes of PCB-contaminated waste from St.-Basile-le-Grand. In addition, strikes by 40,000 nurses and 225,000 other public sector workers effectively paralyzed the health care system, schools and government services in September.

26 September 1989
*Council of
Maritime Premiers*

The Council of Maritime Premiers meets at Shippigan, New Brunswick, for its 75th session, with Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells in attendance as an observer. This is the first formal gathering of the four regional premiers in almost 25 years. CMP announces progress on the negotiation of an agreement on public procurement and the reduction of interprovincial trade barriers. In addition, the premiers discuss the implications of the recent Supreme Court decision on telecommunications.

New Brunswick Premier McKenna announces that the four have agreed to take the issue to the November FMC in Ottawa, to ensure that communications utilities continue to be regulated in the public interest.

28 September 1989
Provincial-International Relations – Manitoba

Manitoba Premier Gary Filmon and Kansas Governor Mike Hayden sign an intergovernmental agreement in Winnipeg to promote conservation, trade and tourism between the province and the state.

28 September 1989
Interprovincial Trade Barriers

All provinces except Quebec reach an agreement-in-principle aimed at reducing barriers to interprovincial trade in wine, although the pact still allows provinces to restrict trade in some areas. The proposed deal is rejected by Quebec because it does not satisfy its key demand that the agreement be extended to the wine production of Quebec's crown agency, the Société des Alcools.

4 October 1989
Transportation – Via Rail

Federal Transport Minister Benoit Bouchard announces that half of the trains operated by Via Rail will be cancelled beginning 15 January 1990. In all, 18 of 38 routes are to be eliminated and the number of trains running reduced to 191 weekly, down from 405.

5 October 1989
Transportation – British Columbia

British Columbia files suit in provincial Supreme Court to prevent Ottawa from closing the 103-year-old Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway on Vancouver Island. The suit contends that the railway was a condition of B.C. entering Confederation and, as such, must be maintained.

13 October 1989
Federal-Provincial Relations – Manitoba

Manitoba announces the establishment of an office in Ottawa to "ensure Manitoba receives its fair share of federal contracts, and to establish a strong presence" in the capital. John Blackwood, a career diplomat, is appointed the province's first official representative. The office is to open 1 November.

16 October 1989
Senate Reform – Alberta

Alberta holds Canada's first election for a Senate position. The election is won by Stan Waters, a candidate for the western-based Reform Party. Three days later Alberta Premier Getty sends Prime Minister Mulroney a letter of nomination listing the names and vote counts of all the candidates in the Senate election, emphasizing that Waters was "the people's choice."

19 October 1989

Regulation –

Telecommunications

Federal Communications Minister Marcel Masse tables a bill in the Commons aimed at establishing the federal government's regulatory control over Canada's domestic telecommunications industry. The bill strips provincially-owned telephone companies of their Crown immunity, making them subject to regulation by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). The bill, an amendment to the Railways Act, is aimed at correcting a regulatory vacuum that has existed since the Supreme Court ruled in August that Ottawa has jurisdiction over provincial telephone companies.

23 October 1989

Meech Lake Accord

– Manitoba

Manitoba releases the report of its all-party Task Force on the Meech Lake Accord. The report followed a series of public hearings throughout the province and recommends significant changes be made to the Accord before the Manitoba government endorses it, including:

- a redefinition of the position of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and a replacement of the "distinct society" clause with an expanded version also recognizing aboriginal and multicultural interests;
- a change disallowing the right of provinces to opt out of national spending programs;
- changes to the appointment process for Supreme Court judges;
- dropping the need for unanimity in the creation of new provinces and in Senate reform.

24 October 1989

Meech Lake Accord

– New Brunswick

The New Brunswick Select Committee on the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord releases its report on the agreement. The report is widely considered to be more conciliatory than the Manitoba report. Among its findings the Committee recommends:

- the negotiation of a "parallel accord" to address outstanding issues of concern to New Brunswick;
- cautious support for the distinct society clause;
- the entrenchment of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as a fundamental characteristic of Canada;

- the designation of the federal government as an institution that must preserve and promote both official languages;
- support for unanimous approval for provincial unanimity in the creation of new provinces as an "interim measure."

26 October 1989
Meech Lake Accord

While attending the launching of a book of his speeches and articles attacking the Accord, former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau launches a stinging attack upon the Meech Lake Accord and the politicians who signed it. According to him, the first ministers should take the Constitutional Accord back to the negotiating table and redraft "a bad deal." The agreement, he charges, will lead to the demolition of Canada.

30 October 1989
Meech Lake Accord
— Newfoundland

Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells confirms that he will introduce a resolution to rescind his province's approval of the Meech Lake Accord if there are no changes to the agreement.

31 October 1989
Regulation —
Environment —
Federal-Provincial
Relations

Mr. Bob Lane, Environment Canada's regional director for environmental protection in Alberta states that that province should not proceed with any new pulp mill — including Alberta-Pacific Industries' \$1.3 billion mill on the Athabasca River — until more is known about the environmental consequences. Although he acknowledges that his department has no legal power to stop the projects, the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office can call for a thorough study, which could take up to two years.

9-10 November 1989
First Ministers'
Conference; Meech
Lake Accord

Canada's first ministers meet in Ottawa for a conference on the economy. As expected, their discussions on the Meech Lake Accord dominate the proceedings, and feature angry exchanges between Mr. Mulroney and Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells. Although prior to the conference Mr. Wells had insisted that he was going to rescind his province's approval of the Accord, he was persuaded to put off such an action for the time being. Despite the more conciliatory tone after two days of discussion, there remained little change in the positions of the principal players in the Meech debate. At separate news conferences Premiers Wells, Filmon and McKenna

all convey the same message: the Meech Lake Accord, as it stands, is unacceptable.

As part of an effort to save the Accord, Senator Lowell Murray is given the job of consulting the premiers to see whether there is enough basis for agreement to schedule another FMC.

On economic matters, the premiers present a unified front against Finance Minister Michael Wilson's proposed Goods and Services Tax (GST), which they say will increase unemployment and reduce economic growth. They also repeat their call for lower interest rates. The ministers fail once again to reach an agreement on reducing interprovincial trade barriers concerning wine and allowing out-of-province companies to bid for provincial government contracts.

23 November 1989
Meech Lake Accord
– Newfoundland

Voting on a private member's resolution from a Liberal government backbencher, the Newfoundland legislature votes 25-16 to condemn the Meech Lake Accord. Although the vote does not constitute a rescission of the province's earlier acceptance of the Accord, it is intended, according to its author, to demonstrate that Premier Wells is not acting on his own in his opposition to the Accord.

30 November 1989
Meech Lake Accord

Senator Lowell Murray begins a series of talks with the provincial premiers, as determined at the FMC on the economy earlier in November. According to Mr. Murray, he is bringing no new federal proposals to break the impasse. His first stops are for discussions with Premiers McKenna, Filmon and Wells.

7 December 1989
Taxation – GST

Professing his doubts that any agreement on a joint federal-provincial tax can be reached before 1 January 1990, Federal Finance Minister Michael Wilson announces that he and his provincial counterparts will reopen talks on joint implementation of the GST.

7 December 1989
Interprovincial
Energy Relations –
Hydroelectricity

Manitoba Premier Gary Filmon and Ontario Premier David Peterson sign a \$13-billion hydroelectric deal between the two provinces in Winnipeg. The deal — the most expensive power deal in Canadian history — will assure Ontario of 1,000 megawatts of electricity from northern Manitoba over a 22-year period beginning in

the year 2000. For its part, Manitoba will construct the long-awaited \$5.5 billion Conawapa dam on the Nelson River to generate the power.

8 December 1989
*Land Claims –
Central and
Eastern Arctic*

Federal Indian Affairs Minister Pierre Cadieux announces in Ottawa that his government has reached an agreement-in-principle on a land claim with the Inuit of the central and eastern Arctic. According to the terms of the agreement, the Inuit peoples will receive about 225,000 sq. kilometres with surface rights, 36,000 sq. kilometres with subsurface rights and \$580 million in cash over 14 years. The agreement provides resource royalties, guarantees hunting rights to the Inuit and gives them a say in land-use planning. The agreement must now be ratified by cabinet, the territorial government and native representatives.

11 December 1989
*French-language
Education –
Nova Scotia*

The federal government and the government of Nova Scotia sign two agreements promoting French-language education in Halifax. The agreements provide for French minority and second-language instruction and expanded cooperation in the promotion of official languages.

11 December 1989
*Interprovincial
Trade Barriers –
Agriculture*

Professing their desire to attack interprovincial trade barriers in agriculture, Canada's federal and provincial agriculture ministers sign a memorandum of understanding on a series of measures, including immediate negotiations, to try to:

- harmonize federal and provincial meat grading and inspection regulations;
- clarify honey grading and inspection standards;
- harmonize interprovincial transportation rules for livestock and commodities;
- liberalize the movement of Canada No. 1 grade small potatoes.

In addition, the ministers agree to try to devise a binding dispute settlement mechanism.

18 December 1989
Senate Reform

Senator Lowell Murray, after a meeting with Alberta Premier Don Getty and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Jim Horsman suggests that Alberta's Senate election process is unconstitutional and confusing.

According to Murray, not even Parliament can decide to have an elected Senate. "That would require an amendment to the Constitution, so, strictly speaking ... I suppose you could say it is unconstitutional."

19 December 1989
Taxation - GST

Finance Minister Wilson announces a reduction in the proposed Goods and Services Tax to 7 percent from the 9 percent rate recommended earlier. To make up the reduction in expected revenues from the GST, which is to fall to about \$18 billion from about \$24 billion, the government proposes, among other things, to:

- reduce credits for lower-income Canadians to \$1.2 billion from \$2.4 billion;
- increase the surtax applied to high-income earners to 5 percent from three;
- scrap a promised cut in the tax rate for middle income earners to 25 percent from 26 percent;
- increase income taxes for large corporations.

19 December 1989
*Council of
Maritime Premiers*

The Council of Maritime Premiers meets in Halifax. The Council, together with Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells, who attended as an observer, express their concern that the proposed GST will hurt the Maritimes more than any other part of the country. The four premiers also agree to send a letter to Prime Minister Mulroney, urging him personally to address the issue of foreign overfishing off the east coast.

Premiers Buchanan, McKenna and Ghiz sign an agreement reducing interprovincial trade barriers on government tenders. Under the agreement, which goes into effect 1 April 1990 the three provinces will lift restrictions on out-of-province competition for government contracts. All procurement contracts worth more than \$25,000, service deals over \$50,000 and construction work valued at over \$100,000 will be open to any company within the Maritimes.

22 December 1989
*Regulation -
Natural Gas*

The Government of Alberta announces that it will support a Federal Court of Appeal case by a number of Calgary companies fighting to end a revival of alleged federal interference with natural gas sales to the United States. The National Energy Board had recently ruled

against allowing deals involving the export of 533 billion cubic feet of natural gas from western Canadian suppliers. The NEB had stated on 21 December that it may consider changing the method it uses to regulate natural gas exports in the wake of the court actions.

28 December 1989
*Regulation –
Environment –
Saskatchewan*

The Federal Court of Appeal rules that the federal government must strike a panel within 30 days to conduct a full environmental review of Saskatchewan's Rafferty-Alameda dam project or the construction licence for the project will be rescinded. The Court revoked the first federal licence in April, following an earlier challenge by the Canadian Wildlife Federation. However, Federal Environment Minister Lucien Bouchard restored the licence following a review and public meetings. The CWF and two Saskatchewan farmers had asked the court to quash the licence on the grounds that due process was not followed.

29 December 1989
Meech Lake Accord

In her final New Year's message, outgoing Governor-General Jeanne Sauvé is perceived as breaking with the traditional impartiality of her office to make a veiled pitch for passage of the Meech Lake Accord. Although Ms. Sauvé avoids the phrase "Meech Lake," references to the Accord were obvious. Newfoundland Premier Wells responds by stating that it was inappropriate for the Crown to be intruding into political affairs.

29 December 1989
*Transportation –
British Columbia*

The British Columbia Supreme Court rules that Ottawa is obliged to keep running passenger trains to Nanaimo from Victoria. In so arguing, the Court upholds the arguments of British Columbia that Ottawa was required to maintain the line as its part of the agreement that brought the western province into Confederation. On 16 January, Federal Justice Minister Doug Lewis announces that his government will appeal the decision to the British Columbia Court of Appeal.

9 January 1990
*Federal-Provincial
Fiscal Relations –
Stabilization*

Alberta Treasurer Dick Johnston threatens to sue Ottawa for up to \$525 million in compensation for economic hardship Alberta suffered during the 1986-87 recession. Alberta has been seeking a \$600-million stabilization payment from Ottawa for revenues lost when oil prices dropped in 1986-87. The federal stabilization program

requires Ottawa to settle Alberta's claim by the end of the year.

12 January 1990
Aboriginal Peoples
— *Justice*

The Alberta and federal governments, along with native and Métis leaders, announce the formation of a task force to determine why a disproportionate number of the province's aboriginal population is in jail. The seven-member task force is to identify problems and recommend solutions in such problem areas as policing, legal aid, courts and the penal system.

23 January 1990
Meech Lake Accord
— *British Columbia*

British Columbia Premier Bill Vander Zalm releases a five-point proposal designed to rescue the Meech Lake Accord. His plan is a package deal, whereby all provinces must agree to the three-year process before it could be implemented, although all provinces would not be required to support his specific proposals for constitutional change. In his proposal, Mr. Vander Zalm suggests, among other things, that all provinces be recognized as "distinct societies" and that the contents of the Meech Lake Accord be divided into two groups, with the proclamation into law on 23 June of all those provisions satisfying the current amending formula, which requires changes to be approved by at least seven provinces representing at least 50 percent of the population. This would include the clause recognizing Quebec as a "distinct society," restrictions to federal spending powers and increased provincial control over immigration.

Mr. Vander Zalm's proposal is quickly rejected by Quebec, which insists that the Accord must be passed intact and by Manitoba, which objects to a proposal that certain elements of the Accord be proclaimed without the full consent of all governments. As well, federal officials question the constitutional validity of the proposals.

24 January 1990
Taxation — GST

Federal Finance Minister Michael Wilson introduces legislation for the proposed Goods and Services Tax into Parliament. The opposition parties serve notice that they will battle the legislation using all procedural means available to them.

- 26 January 1990
Regulation – Environment – Saskatchewan
- Federal Environment Minister Lucien Bouchard orders a halt to construction of the controversial Rafferty-Alameda dam project in Saskatchewan while a court-ordered independent panel studies the project's environmental impact. According to a release, the Saskatchewan government has agreed to halt work on the project. In return, the federal government will pay the province \$1 million per month to a maximum \$10 million as partial compensation for construction time lost.
- 29 January 1990
Governor-General
- Ray Hnatyshyn, a former cabinet minister in the Mulroney government, is sworn in as Canada's 24th Governor-General. He replaces outgoing Governor-General Jeanne Sauvé.
- 29 January 1990
Language Policy, Municipal – Ontario
- The City Council of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, by an 11-2 vote, declares English to be its only official language. A preface to the motion states the resolution is being presented "In the interests of maintaining goodwill, harmony and sound and responsible fiscal management," but its main result is to stir up Canada's language debate from coast to coast. The Sault resolution provokes a storm of protest and is quickly condemned by Ontario Premier David Peterson and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. Such protest notwithstanding, more than 40 Ontario municipalities follow the lead of Sault Ste. Marie shortly thereafter. During the next five months at least 40 Ontario municipalities reject English-only resolutions.
- 2 February 1990
Minority Language Education – Quebec
- The federal government and the Government of Quebec sign an agreement to boost minority language education in that province. According to Quebec Education Minister Claude Ryan, Quebec will spend about \$2 billion, half of which will go to minority-language programs, with the rest to enhance the teaching of English as a second language. The federal government will contribute \$328 million, of which \$290 million will "serve to compensate Quebec for additional expenses relating to the maintenance of anglophone services and educational networks." The agreement is to last until 1993.

6 February 1990
*Minority Language
Education –
Manitoba*

The Manitoba Court of Appeal rules that Manitoba francophones do not have any constitutional right to their own school board. While ruling that as it stands Manitoba's Public Schools Act is unconstitutional, the Court rules that this could be corrected by the province amending its legislation to make it easier for franco-phone children to gain a French-language education.

8 February 1990
Meech Lake Accord

Speaking at a news conference in Quebec City, Quebec Premier Bourassa raises the prospect of a new form of federalism if the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord is not ratified. According to Mr. Bourassa, "I still believe Meech Lake will be ratified... But if it is not ratified, I can guarantee ... that there will be superstructure or institution or supranational institution, whatever name we could use, which could reassure the German investors or the foreign investors that Quebec and Canada are safe places to invest."

12 February 1990
*Energy –
Federal-Provincial
Relations*

The federal government and the Government of Prince Edward Island sign a \$7.8-million agreement to develop alternate energy resources. The five-year agreement will encourage the use of wood chips as an energy source. The federal government will provide \$5.5 million, with the remainder to come from the province.

15 February 1990
Language Policy

In response to resolutions by more than 40 Ontario municipalities declaring themselves English-only, the House of Commons passes a resolution supporting bilingualism. The motion, introduced by Prime Minister Mulroney, called on the Commons "to reaffirm its commitment to support, protect and promote linguistic duality in Canada, as reflected by this House in the Constitution Amendment, 1987 and the Official Languages Act, 1988."

20 February 1990
Budgets

Finance Minister Michael Wilson tables his sixth budget in the Commons. Although he imposed no new taxes, Wilson introduced a number of new measures aimed at reducing the federal deficit. The provinces will bear much of the cost-cutting burden as Mr. Wilson trims \$2.5 billion over the next two years in transfer payments for health, welfare and higher education. The cuts will hurt

Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta the most, with proportionally more money going to poorer provinces.

25 February 1990
Meech Lake Accord
– *Quebec*

At the party's general council in Quebec City, Quebec Liberals adopt a resolution setting up a committee to study Quebec's options if the Meech Lake Accord is not ratified by the 23 June deadline. According to Premier Bourassa, "we are not announcing the formation of a study group because we want to dismantle the country. But ... we haven't received a mandate to practice federalism on our knees." Across the country response is mixed. Some, like Ontario premier David Peterson and Nova Scotia Premier John Buchanan, state that Mr. Bourassa should be taken seriously and urge calm heads to prevail so that an agreement might be reached. Manitoba Premier Gary Filmon, on the other hand, dismisses Mr. Bourassa's comments as "sabre-rattling," while Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells states that the Quebec Premier is bluffing.

27 February 1990
Federal-Provincial
Fiscal Relations

British Columbia Attorney-General Bud Smith announces that his province is taking Ottawa to court over limits placed on Canada Assistance Plan payments in the recent federal budget. The B.C. court action is thereafter joined by Alberta, Ontario and Manitoba.

2 March 1990
Regulation –
Environment –
Alberta

Announcing that his government has accepted the recommendations of a federal-provincial environmental review panel, Alberta Environment Minister Ralph Klein announces that a huge Alberta-Pacific pulp mill project in northern Alberta will not go ahead until further environmental studies are complete.

8 March 1990
Meech Lake Accord
– *Newfoundland*

In a speech from the throne opening the Newfoundland legislature, Premier Clyde Wells confirms that his government will rescind its approval of the Meech Lake Accord. According to Mr. Wells, he is taking this action because he sees no intention of either of the federal or Quebec governments to change any part of the Constitutional Accord. According to Mr. Wells, "under no circumstances can we ever accept changes that would exacerbate the present situation by entrenching forever the regional economic disparities that now exist in Canada."

13 March 1990
*Regulation –
Environment –
Alberta*

The Federal Court of Appeal rules in favour of environmental groups and orders the federal government to conduct a review of the Oldman dam project in southern Alberta. The court rules in favour of the Friends of the Oldman River Society, which argued that a federal review was mandatory because the dam affects several areas of federal responsibility, including native people, fish and migratory birds. Announcing his government's intention to appeal the matter to the Supreme Court, Alberta Premier Getty confirms that construction will continue despite the court decision.

15 March 1990
*Minority Language
Education –
Alberta;
Supreme Court*

In a unanimous ruling on the case *Mahe v. Alberta*, the Supreme Court of Canada rules in favour of Alberta francophones who had sought the right to control their own schools. The court agreed with Edmonton parents who launched the court action that Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms imposes on provincial legislatures an obligation to enact precise legislative schemes for minority language education. The ruling set a "sliding scale" approach for living up to the charter's requirement that minority language instruction be provided "where numbers warrant." Although the court does not award the Edmonton group their own school board, it rules that such groups should be represented on existing school boards and should have exclusive authority over funding of French-language programs.

Writing on behalf of the court, Chief Justice Brian Dickson holds that section 23 of the charter is designed to preserve and promote Canada's two official languages and cultures "by ensuring that each language flourishes, as far as possible, in provinces where it is not spoken by the majority." For this reason, it is imperative that minority communities have control over their schools.

15 March 1990
Regulation – Energy

The National Energy Board announces that it is changing its procedure used to determine whether Canada is getting economic benefit from natural gas exports. It is dropping its so-called "benefit-cost test," a key method used by the board in determining whether contracts signed for the supply of natural gas to U.S. purchasers are in the national interest. Under the test NEB officials calculated whether an export contract would bring suffi-

cient returns to the producer to pay both the costs of bringing the gas to the market and the costs of searching for natural gas to replace the amount sent to the United States. The decision is hailed, alternatively, as a major victory for the Alberta government and gas exporters, and denounced as a sellout to U.S. interests by the Council of Canadians.

20 March 1990

*Regulation –
Environment*

Federal and provincial environment ministers, meeting at the Globe '90 conference in Vancouver, agree on a plan to cut in half the use of disposable packaging and get tough with pulp mill polluters. The ministers agree to ask manufacturers to reduce packaging by 20 percent of 1988 levels by 1992 and to achieve a 50-percent reduction by the year 2000. The national strategy on pulp and paper mills calls for legislation to reduce the pollution in pulp mill effluent by 75 to 80 percent. The plan would virtually eliminate dioxins and furans, the most dangerous pollutants.

21 March 1990

*Meech Lake Accord
– New Brunswick*

New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna introduces resolutions in the New Brunswick legislature that would see the province ratify the Meech Lake Accord if enough support could be obtained from the other provinces for a second, companion agreement. The motion proposes a series of amendments to the Meech Lake Accord, which include:

- the recognition of the equality of the English and French linguistic communities in New Brunswick;
- an addition requiring Parliament and the Government of Canada to promote the linguistic nature of Canada;
- further assurances that Charter rights will not be infringed upon by the Accord;
- a proposal that the Yukon and Northwest Territories be included in the selection of Supreme Court justices and Senate nominations;
- measures to strengthen and monitor the federal government's spending power;

- a change in the amending formula for the creation of provinces from that of unanimity to two-thirds/50 as it was before Meech Lake;
- provision for the inclusion of the governments of Yukon and the Northwest Territories in future aboriginal constitutional conferences.

21 March 1990
*Western Premiers
 Conference;
 Meech Lake Accord*

The four western premiers meet in Vancouver to review alternatives for resolving differences over the constitutional amendments proposed in the Meech Lake Accord. The premiers welcome New Brunswick Premier McKenna's resolutions on the Constitution as "a positive gesture," and appoint a task force to explore all proposals to save the Accord. The Western Canada Task Force on Meech Lake, made up of two senior officials from each province, is to meet in Edmonton within a week. The premiers agree to consider the task force's recommendations.

22 March 1990
Meech Lake Accord

In a nationally-televised address Prime Minister Mulroney announces the formation of a special House of Commons committee to study the New Brunswick proposal for the Meech Lake Accord. The all-party committee is to hold cross-country hearings and report back to Parliament by 18 May.

22 March 1990
*Meech Lake Accord
 - Newfoundland*

Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells introduces a motion into the Newfoundland legislature to rescind that province's agreement of the Meech Lake Accord.

23-24 March 1990
*Council of
 Maritime Premiers;
 Conference of
 Atlantic Premiers*

Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells hosts a two-day meeting of the four Atlantic premiers in Corner Brook, Newfoundland. The main topic of discussion was the Meech Lake Accord, with the three Maritime premiers discussing with Premier Wells his concerns about the Accord.

In a separate meeting of the Council of Maritime Premiers the three Maritime premiers meet to "cover for eventualities;" that is, to begin to explore the implications of a future without Quebec. Premier Ghiz noted that "I don't want to give the impression that we're alarmed at all, but we are doing our homework." That homework will take the form of compiling statistical information on trade and commerce with Quebec.

27 March 1990
Taxation – GST

After an Ottawa meeting, provincial finance ministers declare that they will not help the federal government collect the proposed Goods and Services Tax scheduled to go into effect 1 January 1990. After meeting with his provincial counterparts the next day Mr. Wilson announces that the door is still open for cooperation, but only if they change their sales tax systems. However, he is still talking with provincial ministers about reducing some complexities of the tax.

27 March 1990
*Regional
Development –
Prince Edward
Island*

Federal Employment Minister Barbara McDougall announces that a locally-controlled corporation will be created to encourage industrial development in the Summerside, P.E.I. area following the announced closure of a Canadian Forces base there. According to McDougall, the federal government will provide \$900,000 over the next two years for interim management of the new corporation. The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency will inject up to \$10 million into the area over five years beginning in 1992.

28 March 1990
*Meech Lake Accord
– Quebec*

The Liberal government of Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa supports a Parti Québécois motion in the Quebec National Assembly declaring that Quebec would not accept any aspect of New Brunswick's constitutional proposal that would change the content or scope of the Meech Lake Accord. The motion states that the Quebec government "officially rejects in the name of Quebecers, all constitutional proposals including New Brunswick's ... which would constitute an amendment or modification susceptible to changing the content and the scope of the Meech Lake Accord."

30 March 1990
*Agriculture –
Federal-Provincial
Relations*

Speaking at the conclusion of a federal-provincial meeting of the country's agriculture ministers, Federal Agriculture Minister Don Mazenkowski announces that the federal government is prepared to spend nearly \$1 billion to aid farmers but only if the provinces pay half the tab. The provinces are critical of the offer, maintaining that as it was the federal government which initiated the plan without consulting the provinces, the federal government should shoulder a greater share of the costs.

1 April 1990
*Land Claims –
Yukon*

The federal government and Yukon Indians sign a major land claim agreement giving aboriginal people in that Territory control of more than 41,000 square kilometres of land and \$232 million in cash. In addition, the agreement provides for oil and gas rights, land use, forestry and mineral rights. It commits the federal and territorial governments to negotiating self-government agreements with each of the 14 bands that make up the Council of Yukon Indians. The accord must be ratified by the federal and territorial cabinets and the individual bands.

2 April 1990
*Energy –
Federal-Provincial
Relations;
Regulation –
Environment*

Federal and provincial energy ministers meet for their annual meeting in Kananaskis, Alberta. The ministers agree on the need for a national environment assessment review policy in order to avoid further federal-provincial clashes over environmentally-sensitive projects. In addition, the ministers agree that global climate changes resulting from carbon dioxide emissions pose a major problem. An official communiqué released after the meeting said achievement of a 20 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions, as recommended by a 1989 federal study, would cause "significant economic dislocation and would require significant changes in lifestyle."

3 April 1990
Language Policy

Canada's Commissioner of Official Languages D'Iberville Fortier presents his annual report on the implementation of the Official Languages Act. Fortier criticizes the government for its "slower than slow" implementation of the Act. "Our analyses reveal that the 1988 Official Languages Act has, to this point, had little impact in at least 80 percent of federal institutions. The promised renewal of bilingualism within the federal administration has yet to occur."

4 April 1990
*Language Policy –
Quebec*

Concerned about the increasing use of English by immigrant children in its French-language schools, the Montreal Catholic School Commission unanimously adopts a proposal to ban the use of languages other than French anywhere on school premises. Under the proposed plan, students who defied the policy could be transferred to other schools, or expelled.

5 April 1990
Senate Reform

Prime Minister Mulroney announces that a Commons committee will hold public hearings during the summer on a federal government proposal for an elected Senate. He tells reporters, however, that the appointment of Alberta's elected Senate nominee could "prove lethal" to Senate reform. If large provinces such as Ontario decided to fill their vacancies by elections as well, the result would be entrenchment of the existing regional balance in the Senate, he explained.

6 April 1990
*Meech Lake Accord
- Newfoundland*

The Newfoundland legislature approves a resolution to rescind that province's previous approval of the Meech Lake Accord. It is the first time a provincial government has rescinded a constitutional resolution of a previous government.

6 April 1990
Meech Lake Accord

At a Quebec City press conference Federal Environment Minister Lucien Bouchard states that English Canadians may well be forced to choose between Quebec and Newfoundland. Quebec Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs Gil Rémillard, who accompanied Mr. Bouchard, notes that "Canada can survive very well without Newfoundland."

6 April 1990
*Federal-Provincial
Fiscal Relations*

Federal Minister of State for Finance, Gilles Loiselle, confirms that, under a capping formula introduced by the Trudeau government in 1982, further cuts will be made in federal equalization payments. Under the formula, the equalization fund paid to Canada's so-called "have-not" provinces is tied to increases in the gross national product. This is the first time the cap has been implemented because the provinces' normal equalization payments have outstripped growth in the economy. Cuts in the payments are estimated to total \$1 billion over two years.

6 April 1990
*Regional
Development -
Quebec*

The federal government and the Government of Quebec sign an agreement to develop a marine park at the junction of the St. Lawrence and Saguenay Rivers, in an effort to save the endangered Beluga whale population. Ottawa will contribute \$7.5 million over the next five years; Quebec's share will be \$2 million.

9 April 1990
*Land Claims -
Western Arctic*

The federal government and representatives of the Dene and Métis of the western Arctic sign a final land claim agreement that will give natives in the western North-

west Territories control of more than 180,000 kilometres of land. The accord gives the 15,000 Dene and Métis surface title to 181,230 sq. kilometres of land. They will also get sub-surface mineral rights to 10,000 sq. kilometres within the larger area and \$500 million in cash compensation over 20 years. Issues of self-government and treaty rights of concern to the natives will be discussed in coming months, according to federal Minister of Indian Affairs Tom Siddon.

10 April 1990
Rural Development

Rural development ministers from the four western provinces meet in Edmonton to work on a coordinated approach to revitalize rural communities. Discussions revolve around decentralizing government departments as well as attracting foreign investment and creating new industries to help stem the flow of people from small towns to the cities.

10 April 1990
Taxation - GST

The House of Commons approves the government's controversial Goods and Services Tax legislation in a 144-114 vote. The bill now goes to the Senate.

19 April 1990
*Regulation -
Environment*

Six provinces — Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Quebec, Ontario and Nova Scotia — meet to discuss the federal government's Environmental Assessment Review Process. The provinces agree to demand that Ottawa amend the process "in order to remove environmental policy from the courts." A leaked memo records the provinces' concern that Ottawa not be allowed to intrude on areas the provinces consider to be within their jurisdiction.

23 April 1990
*French-language
Education -
Saskatchewan*

Citing legal complications, Saskatchewan Education Minister Ray Meiklejohn announces that his province will delay setting up a new French school system. A 1988 Court of Queen's Bench ruling held that Saskatchewan francophones have a constitutional right to manage and control the 13 French schools in the province.

24 April 1990
*Regulation -
Environment -
Alberta*

Federal Environment Minister Lucien Bouchard announces that his government will conduct a full environmental assessment on the half-completed Oldman River dam in Alberta. According to Mr. Bouchard the government has not yet decided whether to issue a stop-work order on the dam, because leaving it partly com-

pleted could raise safety problems during spring flooding.

25 April 1990
*French-language
Education –
Saskatchewan*

In a strongly-worded letter to Saskatchewan Premier Grant Devine, Prime Minister Mulroney states that the province's decision to delay funding for francophone school boards ignores the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and may also violate the spirit of a 1988 federal agreement giving the province \$60 million to expand French education and services.

26 April 1990
*Regulation –
Energy*

The National Energy Board grants tentative approval for natural gas exports to the United States under four contracts it denied last November. The earlier ruling caused an uproar among Western Canadian energy producers and led to a major change in NEB regulations.

27 April 1990
*Regulation –
Environment –
Saskatchewan*

George McLeod, Saskatchewan minister responsible for the Rafferty-Alameda dam project, announces that his province will resume work on the project before a federal environmental review has been completed. According to McLeod, although Saskatchewan had agreed to halt work on the project, an engineering panel has recommended that work on the dam continue in order to stabilize the massive earthwork structure.

30 April 1990
*Regulation –
Environment –
Saskatchewan*

Federal Environment Minister Lucien Bouchard criticizes the Saskatchewan government decision to go ahead with construction of its Rafferty-Alameda dams project, stating that the province may be violating the spirit of an agreement reached earlier this year for an environmental assessment of the project.

7 May 1990
Fisheries

Federal Fisheries Minister Bernard Valcourt announces the details of his government's long-awaited \$584-million fisheries adjustment package to the Atlantic fishing provinces (including Quebec). The underlying thrust of the five-year plan is to adjust the size of the fishery industry to declining fish stocks, and to encourage diversification of the fishing economy.

7-8 May 1990
*Western Premiers
Conference*

The Western Premiers meet in Portage La Prairie to discuss economic issues and the Meech Lake Accord. During the first day, discussions are limited to economic issues. The premiers criticize the federal government's

monetary and agricultural policies, saying they are doing immeasurable damage to the four western provinces. Also on the agenda are western economic cooperation, international trade and the environment. The second day is spent discussing the Meech Lake Accord. While the premiers fail to convince Manitoba Premier Filmon to accept the Accord, the four premiers discuss possible ways to deal with the concerns of the three holdout provinces. Among these is the development of a "sunset clause," which suggests that the unanimity clause in the Meech Lake Accord applying to Senate reform would be phased out after three or five years if the reform effort failed.

9 May 1990
*Interprovincial
 Trade Barriers*

Canada's federal and provincial trade ministers meet in Ottawa. High on the agenda is the need for an inter-provincial agreement on beer. Federal Trade Minister John Crosbie warns provincial officials of an upcoming U.S. trade action based upon the variety of provincial trade barriers which favour beer brewed within a province. An interprovincial deal is considered a key first step towards opening up Canada's borders to U.S. and other foreign beer.

14 May 1990
*Meech Lake Accord
 - Quebec*

Speaking to a European audience, Quebec Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs Gil Rémillard states that Quebec now constitutes a nation and will seek a "substantial reorganization" of its association with the rest of Canada if the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord is not ratified. "The consequences of the Accord's rejection will be serious for the future of the country, and Quebec will have to seek a substantial reorganization of the association that ties it with the Canadian federation while taking into account its history as a distinct society," he states.

17 May 1990
*Meech Lake Accord;
 Charest Committee*

The special House of Commons committee, chaired by M.P. Jean Charest, issues a unanimous report, urging that the Meech Lake Accord be approved by 23 June, but also proposing some additional constitutional amendments. Among the 23 recommendations in the report are:

- a call for the promotion of Canada's linguistic duality by the Parliament and the Government of Canada;

- a declaration that the distinct society clause "in no way impairs the effectiveness of the Charter of Rights;"
- a proposal to amend the process for Senate reform by moderating the requirement for unanimous consent for changes to the Senate after a three-year period, at which time a less restrictive method with some form of regional approval would be used;
- a recognition that aboriginal peoples and the country's multicultural heritage are fundamental elements of Canada by putting them in the body of the Constitution;
- granting to Yukon and the Northwest Territories a similar role as the provinces in the selection of Senators and Supreme Court judges;
- providing in a companion resolution reassurance that the federal spending power will not be impaired by the Accord;
- identifying Senate reform as a priority item for the next constitutional round.

Across the country, reaction by the first ministers is mixed. Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa states that "I have the feeling that Quebec is not understood by English Canada because they are proposing demands which are unacceptable." Newfoundland's Premier Clyde Wells notes that "while I can't just simply accept everything that's in the report, I'm encouraged by the content and general direction of it [the report]." According to Ontario Premier David Peterson, the unanimous backing was "extraordinarily constructive" and will be "very helpful to the discussions that will have to ensue."

18 May 1990
Meech Lake Accord

Minister responsible for federal-provincial relations Lowell Murray begins meeting the premiers individually about the Meech Lake Accord and the Charest Committee report.

18 May 1990
Conservative Party, Federal

Accusing Prime Minister Mulroney of backing down on the promises he made to Quebecers six years ago, Quebec Conservative MP François G  rin quits the Tory

caucus vowing to promote sovereignty-association for Quebec while sitting as an independent in Parliament.

21 May 1990
*Conservative Party,
Federal; Meech
Lake Accord*

In a move precipitated by the publication of a telegram of support he sent to the Parti Québécois, Federal Environment Minister Lucien Bouchard, who was Prime Minister Mulroney's Quebec lieutenant, resigns from cabinet and the Conservative Party, saying he cannot countenance any changes to the Meech Lake Accord. According to Mr. Bouchard, the critical factor in his decision to resign was the report of the Charest Committee, which he felt had ignored his advice on the constitutional impasse, and had been influenced more by Liberal leadership candidate Jean Chrétien in its final report.

24 May 1990
*Supreme Court –
Aboriginal Treaty
Rights*

In a ruling seen as significant by Canada's aboriginal leaders, the Supreme Court of Canada, in *Regina v. Sioui*, rules unanimously that a 230-year-old treaty giving Hurons in Quebec the right to exercise their customs on treaty lands is still valid. The Quebec government, which had charged Hurons living near Quebec City with violating provincial park laws by building camp fires and cutting saplings for a religious ceremony, had argued in court that the original document signed was not a treaty. According to Justice Lamer, the treaty is still valid despite long disuse and cannot be extinguished without the consent of the Hurons.

25-28 May 1990
Meech Lake Accord

In what he describes as an attempt to reduce the areas of disagreement on the Meech Lake Accord among the premiers, Prime Minister Mulroney begins three days of individual meetings with the ten premiers at 24 Sussex Drive.

30 May 1990
*Meech Lake Accord
– Newfoundland*

Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells tables an alternate constitutional proposal consisting of amendments to the Meech Lake Accord in the Newfoundland legislature. Quebec Premier Bourassa reiterates that Quebec will not accept any changes to the agreement.

30 May 1990
*Land Claims –
Alberta*

The Government of Alberta introduces legislation granting the province's Métis people increased powers for self-government and 506,250 hectares of land, together with a financial package worth \$310 million over 17

years. Alberta is the first province to grant both self-government and title to settlement lands to Métis people. In return, the Métis have set aside their longstanding lawsuit against the province over oil and gas revenues from their traditional lands.

31 May 1990
*Supreme Court –
Aboriginal Rights*

In a decision hailed by aboriginal groups, the Supreme Court, in *Regina v. Sparrow*, rules that native rights cannot be arbitrarily restricted or abolished by governments. Commenting on a case involving a British Columbia Indian who was charged in 1984 with using a drift net larger than regulations to catch salmon, the Supreme Court makes a strong statement on the existence of native rights and narrowly defines the grounds on which federal and provincial governments can limit those rights by legislation or regulation.

31 May 1990
*Privatization –
Alberta*

Alberta Premier Don Getty announces his government's intention to sell off a major portion of Alberta Government Telephones, its \$2-billion telecommunications giant. According to Mr. Getty, a major factor in the decision was the recent Supreme Court of Canada decision which assigned responsibility for telecommunications to the federal government and the CRTC.

31 May 1990
Meech Lake Accord

Prime Minister Mulroney invites the ten premiers to dinner on 3 June at the Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec to discuss the Meech Lake Accord, saying that if there is enough movement at the gathering the first ministers will continue their talks at a formal meeting the next day in Ottawa.

3-9 June 1990
Meech Lake Accord

After their dinner on 3 June the eleven first ministers agree to stay in Ottawa to continue closed door discussions. They continue to conduct negotiations in private on the Meech Lake Accord for the whole of the subsequent week.

9 June 1990
Meech Lake Accord

After a week of protracted negotiations, Prime Minister Mulroney and the ten premiers sign the 1990 Constitutional Agreement. Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells, whose signature to the agreement was made reluctantly and conditionally, announces his intention to submit the agreement to the people of Newfoundland.

The 1990 Constitutional Agreement is composed of six parts, which include:

- the undertaking of the three hold-out provinces to submit the Meech Lake Accord immediately for legislative or public consideration and "to use every possible effort" to achieve a decision prior to 23 June;
- a commitment to achieve an elected, more "equitable" and more effective Senate by 1 July 1995 under Meech Lake's requirement for unanimity, with the help of a commission that will begin work this summer. If the first ministers cannot reach an agreement by 1995, there would be automatic changes to the Senate, readjusting the number of seats each province now holds;
- agreement to clarify the effect on the Charter of the "distinct society" clause in the Meech Lake Accord through a simple legal opinion prepared by six constitutional experts;
- establishment of a special Commons committee which will begin work on the idea of a Canada clause and submit a report by 1990.

The first ministers also agree to a package of additional amendments to the Constitution, which are mainly non-controversial adjustments to the Meech Lake Accord. These include a provision to further protect sexual equality rights, the right of the territories to be included in appointments to the Supreme Court and future constitutional conferences, the entrenchment in the Constitution of New Brunswick's bilingualism laws, and the promise to hold aboriginal conferences every three years.

11 June 1990
Meech Lake Accord
 - Newfoundland

Declaring that there is not enough time to hold a provincial referendum on the matter, Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells announces that a free vote on the Meech Lake Accord will be held in the Newfoundland House of Assembly before 23 June. Mr. Wells asks members of the House to determine how their constituents feel about the issue before the vote.

12 June 1990
Meech Lake Accord
– *Newfoundland*

Newfoundland Premier Wells launches a province-wide consultation on the Meech Lake Accord by asking people to decide between rejecting the Accord with their heads and accepting it with their hearts. Although he repeats his long-held concerns about the Accord, and insists he has no doubts about his position, he states that Newfoundlanders will also have to consider whether rejecting the Accord could upset the political and economic stability of Canada.

12 June 1990
Meech Lake Accord
– *Manitoba*

An attempt to speed passage of the Meech Lake Accord through the Manitoba legislature is blocked when Elijah Harper, the Assembly's only aboriginal member, refuses to waive house rules requiring two day's notice for a motion to be presented to members. According to Harper, he is taking this action because the concerns of aboriginal peoples were not properly considered by the first ministers in their negotiations.

14-15 June 1990
Justice

Canada's federal and provincial ministers of justice meet in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Although agenda items include justice for aboriginal people, treatment of juvenile offenders, gun control, parole reform and judicial sentencing guidelines, the issue of most concern is the government's abortion legislation, Bill C-43.

15 June
Meech Lake Accord
– *New Brunswick*

The New Brunswick Legislature unanimously passes the Meech Lake Accord. In speaking on the motion Mr. McKenna states that although the constitutional package is not perfect, it represents the best hope for the country. "For 125 years we've lived together and we've lived lovingly together ... and the only time we fight is when we want to talk about our damn Constitution."

15 June 1990
Federal-Provincial
Fiscal Relations

The British Columbia Court of Appeal rules in favour of a challenge by three provinces — British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario — of a 1990 federal budget measure that would place a 5-percent limit on the annual increase in Canada Assistance Plan payments to those provinces this year. On 18 June Federal Justice Minister Kim Campbell announces that her government will appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court of Canada.

17-18 June 1990
*New England
Governors and
Eastern Canadian
Premiers*

The New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers hold their annual meeting, this year in Mystic, Connecticut. While economic issues were to head up the agenda, Canada's constitutional turmoil dominated the discussions. The economic consequences of the failure of the Accord weighed heavily upon the minds of the New England governors, who expressed concern over the political uncertainties in Canada resulting from a failure to ratify the Accord.

18 June 1990
*Regulation –
Environment*

Federal Environment Minister Robert de Cotret tables his government's long-awaited package of environmental proposals. The bill includes \$100 million in new money annually for environmental assessments. Features of the proposed package include:

- an environmental assessment must be done of any project using federal funds, on federal lands, or initiated by Ottawa;
- the legislation will apply to other federal acts that give the government regulatory authority over natural resources;
- big projects that arouse serious public concern would be assessed by an independent panel of experts with the power to subpoena witnesses;
- money would be provided for opponents of projects to present their cases, but it is not known how much;
- in projects involving joint federal-provincial jurisdiction, the objective would be to set up a joint assessment panel; the federal government will not delegate this role to the provinces;
- the Federal Environmental Assessment Agency will be replaced by a new entity called the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, which is to conduct research into environmental issues as well as managing assessments.

18 June 1990
*Meech Lake Accord
– Aboriginal
Peoples*

Faced with the prospect of deadlock on the Meech Lake Accord in the Manitoba legislature, federal Secretary of State for Federal-Provincial Relations Lowell Murray leads a federal delegation to discuss solutions to the

impasse with Manitoba's aboriginal leaders. Manitoba's aboriginal leaders unanimously reject a six-point offer made by the federal delegation.

19 June 1990
Meech Lake Accord

Speaking in the House of Commons, Prime Minister Mulroney announces his intention to address the Newfoundland House of Assembly 21 June to encourage them to pass the Meech Lake Accord before the 23 June deadline.

20 June 1990
Meech Lake Accord
– *Manitoba*

After having been delayed for more than a week by procedural wrangling over introduction of the Meech Lake Accord, the Manitoba Legislature begins debate on the constitutional agreement. The leaders of all three parties represented in the Legislature are sharply critical of the Prime Minister's suggestion that the province has an obligation to pass Meech Lake before the deadline, regardless of its legislative rules.

20 June 1990
Meech Lake Accord
– *Newfoundland*

Premiers McKenna of New Brunswick and Peterson of Ontario appear before the Newfoundland House of Assembly to appeal for passage of the Meech Lake Accord. In an impassioned address, Mr. McKenna charges that rejection of the Accord would lead to increased racial hatred, higher unemployment and international embarrassment for Canada. In contrast, Mr. Peterson gives the MHAs a low-key history lesson and urges them to pass the Accord to keep Canada together.

20 June 1990
Meech Lake Accord
– *Ontario*

The Ontario Legislative Assembly passes a motion of support for the 1990 Constitutional Agreement signed by the first ministers on 9 June. The motion is intended to assure Ontario's good faith regarding the additional amendments agreed upon at the 3-9 June conference. In preparation for the vote both the New Democratic and Conservative caucuses had freed their members to vote according to their consciences on the resolution, while Liberal members were instructed to support the motion.

21 June 1990
Meech Lake Accord
– *Newfoundland*

Prime Minister Mulroney addresses Newfoundland MHAs in St. John's. He warns the members that rejection of the Meech Lake Accord will turn away foreign investors and push Quebecers towards separatism. According to Mr. Mulroney, the Accord will bring Quebec into the Canadian constitutional family, but if

rejected it will boost separatist forces and lead to another referendum on the province's position in Confederation.

22 June 1990
Meech Lake Accord
— *Manitoba*

Debate in the Manitoba Legislature on the Meech Lake Accord adjourns at 12:30 PM without a vote. Manitoba's political leaders confirm that there is now no way for the Manitoba legislature to ratify the Constitutional Accord before the deadline of 23 June.

22 June 1990
Meech Lake Accord
— *Newfoundland*

The Newfoundland Legislature adjourns before a free vote can be held on the Meech Lake Accord. The adjournment — as well as that in Manitoba — effectively signals the death of the three-year constitutional reform process. The Newfoundland adjournment is marked by bitter acrimony, as Mr. Wells charges Federal Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations Lowell Murray with attempting to manipulate the legislative process in the Newfoundland legislature. Earlier in the day Mr. Murray had announced that, provided Newfoundland had ratified the Accord in its free vote, the federal government would ask the Supreme Court of Canada to rule on whether the 23 June deadline could be moved to 23 September, the anniversary of the date Saskatchewan ratified the Accord in 1987. This would have allowed Manitoba to continue its lengthy public hearing process and ratify the Accord. Upon hearing of Mr. Murray's plan, Mr. Wells tells the Legislature "that's the final manipulation... We're not prepared to be manipulated any longer," before adjourning the House.

23 June 1990
Meech Lake Accord

Prime Minister Mulroney addresses the country on the death of the constitutional agreement. In a speech aimed at calming the national passions and investor fears stirred up by the Meech Lake debate, Mr. Mulroney states that "today we must guard against two dangers; first, to despair that anything can be done and second, to delude ourselves that nothing has happened." Stressing his disappointment at the failure of the Accord, Mr. Mulroney states that "it is a time to mend divisions, and heal wounds and reach out to fellow Canadians. There is much to reflect on before we try again to amend the Constitution. One thing is very clear; we simply must find a better way to do it."

In the Quebec National Assembly, Premier Bourassa states that "English Canada must clearly understand that whatever is said, whatever is done, Quebec is today and forever a distinct society, capable of insuring its own development and destiny." Later he announces that Quebec cannot return to the constitutional bargaining table and will henceforth deal directly with Ottawa. "In the preparation of our future, Quebec must arrange its important assets...Quebec has the freedom of its choices. But it must make those choices realistically, in a calm and lucid state. For my part, I can assure you that my only guide will be the interests of the Quebec people."

24 June 1990
*First Ministers'
Conferences*

Speaking to reporters during a visit to his Charlevoix riding, Prime Minister Mulroney announces that without Quebec there will be no more First Ministers' Conferences.

24 June 1990
*Federal-Provincial
Relations -
British Columbia*

Following the lead of Quebec Premier Bourassa, B.C. Premier Vander Zalm announces that his province will deal directly with the federal government on key issues left unsettled by the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. According to the Premier, "if Quebec can seek sovereignty-association with Canada, then other provinces should also have that option.... I think we should commence the moment Quebec commences so we don't have them getting one particular package and everyone else looking at something different."

26 June 1990
*Supreme Court
Appointments*

Prime Minister Mulroney announces the appointment of Justice Antonio Lamer as the new Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada. Mr. Justice Lamer, a Quebecer, will replace Chief Justice Brian Dickson, who is to retire on 1 July.

27 June 1990
*Intergovernmental
Relations - Quebec*

The Quebec government announces that it will boycott an interprovincial meeting scheduled for Hull, Quebec on the issue of interprovincial trade barriers. The announcement prompts the cancellation of the meeting, which was to have allowed provincial deputy ministers to put the final touches on an agreement to be signed by their ministers at a subsequent meeting in July. That conference also has been cancelled.

29 June 1990
*Constitutional
Change - Quebec*

In a joint news conference, Quebec Premier Bourassa and Parti Québécois leader Jacques Parizeau announce the establishment of a non-partisan legislative commission which, it is expected, will likely result in the drafting of a Quebec constitution. The commission, which is to include about 20 members — including business and labour leaders, academics, artists, provincial, municipal and federal politicians — is to begin its work in fall, 1990.

Chronology: Index

- Aboriginal Peoples: 12 January 1990; 24 May 1990; 31 May 1990
- Aboriginal Peoples – Land Claims: 8 December 1989; 1 April 1990; 9 April 1990; 30 May 1990
- Agriculture: 25 July 1989; 27 July 1989; 30 March 1990
- Annual Premiers Conference: 21-22 August 1989
- Budgets: 20 February 1990
- Consumer Affairs: 11-12 September 1989
- Conference of Atlantic Premiers: 23-24 March 1990
- Conservative Party, Federal: 18 May 1990; 21 May 1990
- Constitutional Change – Quebec: 29 June 1990
- Council of Maritime Premiers: 26 September 1989; 19 December 1989; 23-24 March 1990
- Elections – Quebec: 9 August 1989; 25 September 1989
- Energy: 12 February 1990; 2 April 1990
- Equality Party – Quebec: 2 August 1989
- Federal-Provincial Fiscal Relations: 19 July 1989; 13 October 1989; 9 January 1990; 27 March 1990; 6 April 1990; 15 June 1990; 18 June 1990
- Federal-Provincial Relations: 24 June 1990
- First Ministers' Conference: 9-10 November 1989; 24 June 1990
- Fisheries: 7 May 1990
- Goods and Services Tax (GST): 8 August 1989; 7 December 1989; 19 December 1989; 24 January 1990; 27 March 1990; 10 April 1990
- Governor-General: 29 January 1990
- Intergovernmental Relations – Quebec: 27 June 1990
- Interprovincial Energy Relations: 22 August; 7 December 1989
- Interprovincial Trade Barriers: 12 September 1989; 28 September 1989; 11 December 1989
- Justice: 14-15 June 1990
- Language Policy: 15 February 1990; 3 April 1990; 4 April 1990; 9 May 1990
- Language Policy, Municipal: 29 January 1990
- Meech Lake Accord: 5 July 1989; 13 August 1989; 23 October 1989; 24 October 1989; 26 October 1989; 30 October 1989; 9-10 November 1989; 23 November 1989; 30 November 1989; 30 November 1989; 29 December 1989; 23 January 1990; 8 February 1990; 25 February 1990; 8 March 1990; 21 March 1990; 21 March 1990; 22 March 1990; 28 March 1990; 6 April 1990; 14 May 1990; 17 May 1990; 18 May 1990; 21 May 1990; 25-28 May 1990; 30 May 1990; 31 May 1990; 4-9 June 1990;

- 11 June 1990; 12 June 1990; 15 June 1990; 18 June 1990; 19 June 1990; 20 June 1990; 21 June 1990; 22 June 1990; 23 June 1990
- Minority Language Education: 11 December 1989; 2 February 1990; 6 February 1990; 15 March 1990; 23 April 1990; 25 April 1990
- New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers: 17-18 June 1990
- Privatization: 31 May 1990
- Provincial-International Relations – Manitoba: 28 September 1989
- Regional Development – New Brunswick: 3 August 1989
- Regional Development – Newfoundland: 13 July 1989; 21 July 1989
- Regional Development – Nova Scotia: 22 September 1989
- Regional Development – Prince Edward Island: 27 March 1990
- Regional Development – Quebec: 6 April 1990
- Regulation – Energy: 22 December 1989; 15 March 1990; 26 April 1990
- Regulation – Environment: 31 August 1989; 31 October 1989; 28 December 1989; 26 January 1990; 2 March 1990; 13 March 1990; 20 March 1990; 2 April 1990; 19 April 1990; 24 April 1990; 27 April 1990; 30 April 1990; 18 June 1990
- Regulation – Financial Institutions: 11 August 1989
- Regulation – Transportation: 12 July 1989
- Regulation – Telecommunications: 14 August 1989; 19 October 1989
- Rural Development: 10 April 1990
- Senate Reform: 16 October 1989; 18 December 1989; 5 April 1990
- Supreme Court: 14 August 1989; 15 March 1990; 24 May 1990; 31 May 1990; 26 June 1990
- Taxation: 13 July 1989; 8 August 1989; 7 December 1989; 19 December 1989; 24 January 1990; 27 March 1990; 10 April 1990
- Transportation: 4 October 1989; 5 October 1989; 29 December 1989
- Western Premiers Conference: 21 March 1990; 7-8 May 1990