
Chronology of Events July 1991 – June 1992

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3 July 1991
*Aboriginal Peoples
– Land Claims*

A blueprint for a new relationship between the British Columbia Indians and the federal and provincial governments is released in Vancouver. The report of a seven-member task force recommends an overhaul of the land claims process and an independent treaty commission to monitor it. There is to be no limit on the number of claims being negotiated at any given time and ownership of land, sea and other resources is to be resolved by agreement of the three parties.

3 July 1991
*Regional Develop-
ment – Northwest
Territories*

In Yellowknife, The Northwest Territories and the federal government sign a five-year, \$38.5 million agreement on support for industry and culture designed to boost the northern economy. Ottawa will assume 70 percent of the cost.

4 July 1991
Agriculture

The federal and provincial agricultural ministers meet in Kananaskis, Alberta to focus on ways to help farmers hurt by low grain prices, high interest payments and the huge subsidies paid to European producers. The ministers agree on the establishment of a government-industry advisory group on farm finance policy.

5 July 1991

Aboriginal Peoples
– *Constitutional*
Change

Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark agrees to a process that gives Canada's Aboriginal Peoples an unprecedented role in constitutional reform and opens up the way for aboriginal participation at future First Ministers' Conferences. Following a meeting with Grand Chief Ovide Mercredi and other members of the Assembly of First Nations in Morley, Alberta, Clark approves a parallel reform process designed by Aboriginal People to define their place in a new Canada. This signifies a shift in federal policy that had long envisaged only an advisory role for Aboriginals.

10 July 1991

Environment –
Quebec

Federal Environment Minister Jean Charest orders a global environmental assessment of the proposed \$12.6 billion Great Whale hydroelectric project in northern Quebec, and meets with opposition from the provincial government, environmental and native groups. Quebec Energy Minister Lise Bacon makes it clear that Quebec considers the federal initiative an intrusion into provincial jurisdiction, while environmentalists and the Cree of James Bay express their disappointment that Charest did not stop further development of the Great Whale project, pending the outcome of the report.

12 July 1991

Fiscal Policy

Finance Minister Don Mazankowski unveils draft legislation to keep federal spending increases to an average of 3 percent a year over the next five years. The legislation will make it illegal for the government to spend more than the set amounts except for emergencies and special circumstances. It will also prohibit the government from raising taxes to cover expenditures, although this can be circumvented by passing amendments to the bill.

13 July 1991

Aboriginal Peoples
– *Land Claims*

The Gwich'in Indians of the Mackenzie Delta reach a land-claim settlement with the federal government covering 15,000 square kilometres of land in the Northwest Territories, and providing \$75 million over 15 years, as well as the right to manage wildlife resources and economic development incentives. The settlement was reached after the failure of negotiations with the umbrella group of the Dene Nation and Métis covering all of the Western Arctic. Ottawa has agreed to negotiate with each aboriginal group separately.

20 July 1991
*Premiers –
 British Columbia*

Rita Johnston becomes leader of the Social Credit party, and next premier of British Columbia, replacing Bill Vander Zalm who resigned 2 April 1991 over conflict of interest charges. In Vancouver, Johnston wins on the second ballot of the convention, defeating contender Grace McCarthy 941 votes to 881.

6 August 1991
*Aboriginal Peoples –
 Ontario*

Ontario becomes the first province to recognize the aboriginal inherent right of self-government. In Thunder Bay, Premier Bob Rae signs an historic agreement with 12 First Nations chiefs that commits the province to negotiate the devolution of government powers on a nation-to-nation basis. The agreement could give Aboriginal Peoples more control in such areas of provincial jurisdiction as policing, courts, medical care and natural resources.

10 August 1991
*Progressive
 Conservative Party
 of Canada*

Delegates at the federal Progressive Conservative Party's biennial convention in Toronto vote overwhelmingly in favour of the Quebecer's right to self-determination. Delegates also approve other policy resolutions, among them motions to impose user fees on health care, to privatize the CBC and to abandon the policy of multiculturalism.

15 August 1991
*Supreme Court –
 Federal-Provincial
 Fiscal Relations*

The Supreme Court of Canada rules that Ottawa has the right unilaterally to reduce Canada Assistance Plan payments to the three richest provinces: Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta. Politicians and social groups worry that the decision could mean tax increases, spending cuts or bigger deficits at the provincial level, all of which would contribute to the deterioration of social programs.

18-20 August 1991
*Free Trade –
 North America*

Trade ministers from Canada, Mexico, and the U.S.A. end three days of negotiations for a North American free trade deal. No decisions are made, but the ministers make progress on issues such as:

- services
- investment
- protection of intellectual property such as copyrights
- level of local content required for cars to be shipped duty free across the border

- timetables for phasing out tariff barriers.
- 20 August 1991
Environment – Saskatchewan

Environment Minister Jean Charest announces that Ottawa will not order a halt to further construction of the Rafferty-Alameda dam in southern Saskatchewan. A consultant's report commissioned by the federal government said a shutdown could cause the dam to be breached next spring, posing a possible safety hazard to people downstream. A full federal environmental review is expected to be released next month.
- 26-27 August 1991
Premiers – Annual Conference

Provincial premiers, with the exception of Quebec's Premier Robert Bourassa, wrap up their annual conference in Whistler, B.C. The Premiers call on the prime minister to organize a First Ministers' Conference on the economy before the end of the year. Economic worries, the premiers say, hinder their ability to concentrate on the country's constitutional problems. The premiers also meet, for the first time at their annual meetings, with the leaders of the major national aboriginal organizations.
- 27 August 1991
Aboriginal Peoples – Royal Commission

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney appoints George Erasmus, former Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, and Judge René Dussault of the Quebec Court of Appeal as co-chairmen of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The Commission's mandate will be to examine issues from aboriginal self-government to justice and land claims, and, in the words of the prime minister, "deal with centuries of injustice."
- 27 August 1991
Energy – Quebec

Premier Robert Bourassa announces that construction of the Great Whale hydroelectric project in northern Quebec will be postponed for a year due to reduced demand for power in New York. The delay will allow time for the full environmental assessment announced earlier this month.
- 28 August 1991
Health Policy – Quebec

Quebec passes health-care reforms designed to decentralize and modernize the present system. Some of the new measures include a limited user fee for non-emergency visits to the hospital and a requirement that new doctors work in understaffed parts of the province before being able to practice in major cities.

29 August 1991
Aboriginal Peoples
 – Justice –
 Manitoba

The Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry releases its report recommending sweeping changes to the legal system. The Inquiry calls for a separate native legal system based on generations of tradition, and endorses aboriginal self-government. The report recommends that natives run their own criminal, civil and family legal systems similar to arrangements found in various American states. It also calls for more native judges, police officers and court officials, and training in aboriginal culture for nonaboriginal officers of the justice system. The report follows nearly three years of hearings and study by Associate Chief Justice Al Hamilton of the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench and Associate Chief Judge Murray Sinclair of the Provincial Court.

30 August 1991
Aboriginal Peoples
 – Land Claims –
 Alberta

The federal government signs a \$19.6 million land-claim agreement with the Stoney Indians in Morley, Alberta. Recognizing that the Stoney's lost potential revenue from mineral rights when valleys in the area were flooded and reservoirs built for power projects, the settlement establishes a \$12 million trust fund, to be administered by the tribal council, and a \$4 million economic investment fund. The claim is the second largest to be settled in Alberta.

3 September 1991
Free Trade –
Canada-U.S. –
Disputes

Canada terminates the softwood lumber "memorandum of understanding" with the United States. In 1986 Canada agreed to charge a 15 percent tax on all softwood lumber exported to the United States. The U.S. lumber lobby maintained that Canada was unfairly subsidizing softwood. In the past five years, however, most provinces have introduced forest management measures, including higher stumpage fees which, coupled with the reduced demand for Canadian lumber south of the border, have contributed to higher costs for forest companies. Ottawa now feels that the 15 percent tax is no longer warranted.

5 September 1991
Education – Quebec

Quebec Education Minister Michel Pagé announces the formation of a task force to study the future of English schools in the province. Enrolment in Quebec's English schools fell by 57 percent between 1972 and 1990, while enrolment in French schools fell only 24 percent during

- the same time. Journalist Gretta Chambers will chair the task force.
- 7 September 1991
Aboriginal Peoples
– *Justice*
- In Whitehorse, federal Justice Minister Kim Campbell tells a conference on native justice that she is prepared to give natives more control over police and the courts. Native leaders demand a separate native justice system with their own police, prosecutors and judges.
- 10 September 1991
Environment –
Saskatchewan
- The three-member independent panel set up by Ottawa to study the Rafferty-Alameda dam concludes that the project is relatively harmless to the environment. In its report the panel also finds that the partly completed project will not meet its original objectives such as irrigation and recreation. It may also have some effect on upstream water quality and wildlife habitat.
- 12 September 1991
Justice
- A tentative 20-year agreement regarding RCMP services is reached between the federal government and a committee representing provincial governments that use the force. There will be no change in the existing cost-sharing arrangement: the provinces will continue to pay 70 percent and not the 75 percent Ottawa wanted them to pay.
- 13 September 1991
Energy –
Saskatchewan
- The federal government and the province of Saskatchewan sign a memorandum of understanding under which Ottawa will study the feasibility of building a nuclear power station in the province and establishing a research and technology program, as well as possibly storing nuclear waste.
- 14 September 1991
Aboriginal Peoples
– *Land Claims* –
Saskatchewan
- Saskatchewan Premier Grant Devine and Indian Affairs Minister Tom Siddon sign an agreement on sharing the \$431 million cost of fulfilling outstanding land entitlements of Saskatchewan Indians. Twenty-seven Saskatchewan bands may now get compensation for land to which they were entitled, but never received, under treaties signed between 1871 and 1910. Ottawa will initially pay 70 percent of the cost and Saskatchewan 30 percent, but this will change over the next 15 years with Saskatchewan coming to assume 49 percent of the bill.
- 18 September 1991
Health Policy
- Canada's health ministers meet in Winnipeg and pledge to uphold universal medicare. Federal Health Minister

Benoît Bouchard says he cannot guarantee that Ottawa will maintain the current level of funding to the provinces in light of the federal restraint measures. The ministers also examine ways of improving the efficiency of the present health-care system.

20 September 1991
*Constitutional
Change; Social
Charter*

Speaking at a press conference in Toronto, Ontario Premier Bob Rae announces that he is going to seek support for a charter of social rights to be included in the constitution. Rae argues that access to medicare, social assistance, unemployment insurance and basic education is a fundamental right of every Canadian. Federal Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark responds that a social charter may prove to be unworkable.

23 September 1991
*Elections –
New Brunswick*

Frank McKenna and the Liberal Party win a landslide victory in New Brunswick. Prior to the vote, the Liberals held all 58 seats in the legislature; they now have 46 elected members. The antibilingualism Confederation of Regions Party becomes the official opposition with eight seats while the Conservatives elect only three members, and the NDP, one.

24 September 1991
*Constitutional
Change – Federal
Proposals*

In the House of Commons, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney presents Ottawa's reform proposals, *Shaping Canada's Future Together*. A 30-member committee chaired by Manitoba Conservative MP Dorothy Dobbie and Quebec Senator Claude Castonguay will take the proposals across the country in an effort to invite citizen participation. Among the 28 government proposals are:

- Quebec would be recognized as a "distinct society" by including a new section in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, with a definition of distinct society confined to Quebec's French-speaking majority, unique culture and civil law tradition;
- a Canada Clause defining what it means to be a Canadian in the constitution;
- aboriginal self-government within ten years;
- a reformed Senate that is elected, with more equitable provincial representation and with powers somewhat less than the current Senate;
- a broadened common market clause;

- a new federal head of power to manage the economic union;
- some transfer of powers to the provinces, and streamlining of other powers;
- a new Council of the Federation composed of federal, provincial and territorial representatives to decide on uses of the federal spending power, and the new economic union power;
- inclusion of property rights in the Charter;
- making it harder for legislatures to use the Charter Notwithstanding clause (section 37); and
- more free votes in the House of Commons.

Across Canada, reaction to the government's proposals is generally favourable, although Quebec and aboriginal leaders express opposition. Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa demands a veto over changes to federal institutions and rejects the proposal for economic union. Ovide Mercredi calls the proposals a "betrayal of natives" for not recognizing the immediate and inherent aboriginal right of self-government.

26 September 1991
Constitutional Change – Federal Proposals

Finance ministers meet in Ottawa to discuss the federal government's constitutional proposals. The provinces express concern that Ottawa might use the proposals to gain control of their economies. The federal government wants to strengthen the economy through coordination of fiscal policies and the elimination of interprovincial barriers to trade. Speaking from Quebec City Robert Bourassa again demands a veto over constitutional changes affecting Quebec.

30 September 1991
Constitutional Committees – Prince Edward Island

A committee of the Prince Edward Island legislature issues a report in which it supports the federal proposals to recognize Quebec as a distinct society and to reform the Senate. The report opposes the entrenchment of property rights in the constitution and calls for recognition in principle of the aboriginal right of self-government.

- 1 October 1991
*Constitutional
Change – Monetary
Policy*
- Bank of Canada Governor John Crow criticizes the federal constitutional proposal that would give the provinces a role in Bank of Canada policy. Crow says that monetary policy is indivisible and that it would be inadvisable to give provinces, motivated by their own agendas, the power to determine national policy.
- 4 October 1991
Fisheries
- Fisheries Minister John Crosbie announces \$39 million in emergency aid to fishermen in the Atlantic provinces. Most of the money will be directed to make-work projects to help workers qualify for unemployment insurance.
- 10 October 1991
*Agriculture –
Financial Aid*
- The federal government announces it will provide an extra \$800 million in emergency aid to farmers. Grain farmers suffering from the lowest grain prices in 20 years will get most of the aid, \$700 million, with the remaining \$100 million going to producers of other commodities. Officials in Ottawa say the funds for the program will come from spending cuts and tax increases. Spokesmen for the farmers, who held a rally of 7,000 people at the Manitoba legislature 9 October, are not enthusiastic.
- 17 October 1991
*Elections –
British Columbia*
- Mike Harcourt becomes Premier of British Columbia, defeating Rita Johnston's Socreds, as voters in the province elect an NDP government. The New Democrats take 51 of 75 seats. The Liberals become the official opposition with 17 seats, while the Socreds elect only seven members. The NDP has been in power only once before in British Columbia, from 1972-75.
- 21 October 1991
*Elections –
Saskatchewan*
- Roy Romanow's New Democrats are elected with a majority government in Saskatchewan. The NDP takes 55 of 66 legislature seats. The Conservatives elect only ten members and the Liberals one. Saskatchewan's new leader, Roy Romanow, was a former deputy premier and Attorney-General in the NDP government of Allan Blakeney from 1971-82.
- 22 October 1991
Taxation
- Manitoba abandons plans to harmonize its provincial sales tax with the GST. In August, Prince Edward Island also announced that it was no longer interested in coordinating the federal and provincial sales taxes. Quebec decides to delay the final step in its harmonization by

- postponing for six months the implementation of an 8 percent tax on services in the province.
- 23 October 1991
Senate Reform – Newfoundland
- Speaking in Toronto, Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells advocates a Senate reform that would see an elected Senate based on the U.S. model with equal regional representation. The previous day, in what is generally perceived as a softening of his position, Wells tells the Newfoundland Constitutional Committee that Quebec should be given distinct society status, as well as the power to override the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, in order to preserve and promote its culture, language and civil code within the province.
- 25 October 1991
Free Trade – Canada-U.S. – Disputes
- In Geneva, a panel of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade finds that Canadian provinces unfairly price and distribute imported beer from the United States. Key issues in the GATT decision are the limitations Canada imposes on where imported beer may be sold and the fees it charges for its distribution. In 1987 GATT ruled (against Canada) in a similar dispute launched by the European Community over beer and wine. As a result of that ruling most provinces have since lowered markups on imported wine.
- 28 October 1991
Constitutional Committees – Manitoba
- An all-party committee of the Manitoba legislature releases its report on Manitoba's position on constitutional negotiations. The committee agrees to have Quebec's uniqueness recognized in the Canada clause. It also supports a strong central government, an elected Senate, and the aboriginal right of self-government.
- 29 October 1991
Premiers – Atlantic Premiers' Conference
- Atlantic premiers meet in Summerside, P.E.I., and adopt a series of measures designed to save their provinces money. The premiers pledge greater economic cooperation and the possible integration of some government services. The meeting was called after provinces learned that they would receive about \$145 million less in equalization payments this year. To avoid costly duplication, the provinces are considering the creation of single agencies that would deliver programs and services to all Atlantic provinces.

- 4 November 1991
Regional Development – Ontario
- In order to boost northern Ontario's economy, the province signs a four year, \$95 million, shared-cost agreement with the federal government. The deal will help fund programs in the forestry, mineral and tourism sectors.
- 7 November 1992
Constitutional Committees – Castonguay-Dobbie
- The Special Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada chaired by Claude Castonguay and Dorothy Dobbie is recalled to Ottawa from its cross-Canada, consultative tour, amid allegations of mismanagement and disorganization. Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark promises changes to the committee's scope but stops short of saying whether he will fire Dorothy Dobbie who has been blamed for much of the committee's trouble.
- 8 November 1991
Constitutional Change – Federal Proposals
- Speaking during a special two-hour debate in the National Assembly, Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa urges Quebecers to consider Ottawa's constitutional proposals. Admitting that at present the federal proposals fall short of Quebec's expectations, Bourassa says that he expects modifications. Bourassa's bottom line remains unchanged — recognition of the distinct society for Quebec, a new division of powers between the provinces and Ottawa, and respect for Quebec's territory. For his part Parti Québécois Leader Jacques Parizeau scorns Ottawa's latest offerings and accuses the federal government of making a grab for Quebec's economic powers.
- 13 November 1991
Constitutional Change – Public Conferences
- Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark announces that the federal government, together with leading public policy organizations, will sponsor five regional public conferences to discuss the government's proposed constitutional package.
- 19 November 1991
Social Assistance
- The National Council of Welfare releases a report in which it concludes that people on welfare need inflation protection. The report partly blames the federal government for the drop in income received by welfare recipients in the last year. It is the responsibility of the provinces to set welfare rates, but because of recent federal restraint measures they have failed to keep up with increases to welfare benefits.
- 21 November 1991
Labour Training
- In Montreal, the federal and Quebec governments end months of dispute over manpower training and sign a

- labour agreement by which Quebec's professional training commission will coordinate all labour force development in the province. Ottawa will spend \$685 million over two years, with Quebec contributing \$365 million. The agreement will stay in place until a new constitutional deal is reached.
- 25 November 1991
*Constitutional Committees –
Castonguay-Dobbie
Committee* Citing health reasons, Claude Castonguay resigns as co-chairperson of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons and is replaced by Senator Gérald Beaudoin.
- 28 November 1991
*Regional
Development –
Quebec* The federal government announces a \$300 million, five year federal-provincial program designed to help boost Quebec's economy. The federal government will contribute \$160 million to the program. The media outside Quebec accuse the federal government of pandering to Quebec in light of the current constitutional crisis, but political leaders claim the agreement is routine.
- 28 November 1991
*Constitutional
Committees –
Nova Scotia* Nova Scotia's advisory committee on constitutional reform, chaired by Eric Kierans, releases its report. The committee endorses distinct society status for Quebec, the inherent right of aboriginal self-government, an elected Senate, and electoral reform that would allow for proportional representation in the Commons. In its report the committee also stresses that Nova Scotians are tired of a federal government so engrossed in the constitutional debate that it fails to address the pressing economic situation in the country.
- 6 December 1991
*Free Trade –
Canada-U.S. –
Disputes* Canada accepts a report by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade that accuses the provinces of unfairly restricting the sales of U.S. beer. Federal Trade Minister Michael Wilson says provinces must start to make their markets accessible to U.S. beer in order to comply with the international ruling.
- 7 December 1991
*Aboriginal Peoples
– Land Claims –
Yukon* Yukon Indians accept an agreement on land claims and self-government which was first negotiated in March 1990. The agreement addresses issues common to all 14 Yukon First Nations and provides a mechanism by which land-claim agreements can be negotiated on an individual basis. The agreement also outlines a self-government

model that gives Indians the ability to govern themselves, administer their own programs, raise money through taxation and pass their own laws for settlement lands.

9 December 1991
Education

In Toronto, provincial education ministers reach an agreement on national educational testing. The testing is designed to provide a better idea of how Canadian students perform in literacy and mathematics. All provinces and territories except Saskatchewan have accepted the plan.

9 December 1991
*Aboriginal Peoples
– Land Claims –
Ontario*

Ontario and the federal government sign an agreement with the Nishnawbe-Aski First Nation. The deal provides \$60.5 million for housing, roads, sewers and other necessities as well as 608 square kilometres of Crown land, with resource rights, to be used as reserves in northern Ontario. This is the first time a province has surrendered resource rights and land without seeking compensation from the federal government.

11 December 1991
*Aboriginal Peoples
– Justice*

The Law Reform Commission of Canada advises the federal and provincial governments to start negotiating with native communities the possible establishment of an aboriginal justice system. It also recommends that interim measures be adopted to make the present system more accessible to Aboriginal People.

12 December 1991
*Economy –
First Ministers’
Conference*

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney agrees to hold a First Ministers’ Conference to discuss the troubled economy, but warns that Ottawa is not prepared to spend more money, run up the deficit or cut interest rates.

12 December 1991
*Social Assistance
Reforms*

A federal House of Commons subcommittee reports on child poverty in Canada. It recommends reforming the child tax credit system and family allowances to make more money available to low income families. The report also calls for Ottawa, in cooperation with the provinces, to develop a universally accessible day-care system as well as national welfare standards.

18 December 1991
*Health Policy –
Quebec*

Quebec’s Health Minister Marc-Yvan Côté releases a discussion paper of proposals on how Quebec can continue to fund its \$12 billion-a-year health-care system. Among the controversial proposals are some that, if

- implemented, would violate the Canada Health Act. These are: charges for room and board in hospitals, a \$5 user fee for basic consultations with a physician, and a tax on medical services according to the user's ability to pay. Quebec feels its position is justified in view of Ottawa's declining contributions to provincial medicare programs.
- 9 January 1992
Language Policy – Alberta
Alberta Premier Don Getty calls for an end to official bilingualism and multiculturalism. Getty's comments provoke angry responses across Canada from federal as well as provincial politicians.
- 10 January 1992
Aboriginal Peoples
The federal government announces that it will spend \$8 million to build Canada's first prison on an Indian reserve. The minimum security prison will be for Aboriginal People, operated by Aboriginal People. It is hoped that such an institution will reduce the cultural shock native prisoners often experience when they become incarcerated.
- 14 January 1992
Constitutional Change – Aboriginal Peoples
Prince Edward Island Premier Joe Ghiz proposes a treaty of reconciliation between the federal and provincial governments and the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada. Ghiz believes the treaty would provide the basis for negotiations on such matters as self-government, transfer payments, taxation, and resource development. Ovide Mercredi, Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, welcomes the proposal.
- 14 January 1992
Constitutional Committees – New Brunswick
New Brunswick's Commission on the Constitution releases its report. It endorses the Triple-E Senate as a means of achieving greater regional equality. The committee supports recognition of Quebec's distinct society, official bilingualism, the inherent right of self-government of Aboriginal Peoples, as well as the entrenchment of social programs in the constitution.
- 17-19 January 1992
Constitutional Change – Public Conferences
As announced 13 November 1991, the first of five federal constitutional conferences, entitled "Renewal of Canada: Division of Powers," is held in Halifax. Participants include the Beaudoin-Dobbie Committee, federal and provincial representatives, interest-group leaders, and "ordinary Canadians." Among the points of consensus are:

- a strong federal government is needed in order to ensure that basic benefits are equally accessible to people across Canada, regardless of shifts in federal-provincial power-sharing arrangements;
- "asymmetrical federalism," which would allow provinces to negotiate their own power-sharing arrangements with Ottawa, is acceptable. Asymmetry is seen as a way to accommodate Quebec's demands for more powers without extending them to other provinces; and
- national standards, affecting all provinces and territories in domestic and external matters, are a necessity. The prevailing feeling among the delegates is that this should be achieved through cooperation and consultation between the federal government and the provinces.

23 January 1992
*Supreme Court –
Environmental
Reviews*

The Supreme Court of Canada rules that the federal government has a constitutional right to hold environmental reviews on any project with wide environmental implications, even if it falls under provincial jurisdiction. At issue is the Oldman River dam in Alberta. In an 8-1 ruling the high court says that the federal government has the power to order environmental studies on any project that impinges on any aspect of federal jurisdiction. Ottawa did not order environmental hearings on the project until it was almost completed. Alberta, together with six other provinces, challenged the federal government's right to interfere, claiming the dam was a provincial matter. Following the Supreme Court judgement, environmentalists and native groups, long opposed to the Oldman project, express their satisfaction with the court's decision.

23-26 January 1992
*Constitutional
Change – Public
Conferences*

The second federal constitutional conference, "Renewal of Canada: Institutional Reform," is held in Calgary. The main issue under discussion, Senate reform, receives strong support as delegates endorse an elected and effective upper house. Two specific proposals are discussed: equal representation, demanded by Newfoundland and Alberta, which would see an equal number of Senators elected from each province, and equitable representation, proposed by the federal government, which would weight representation in favour of the smaller provinces.

Delegates do not come to a consensus between the two. Women's groups, Aboriginals, the disabled and visible minorities also demand greater representation in the reformed Senate. Ottawa's proposal for the creation of the Council of the Federation is rejected overwhelmingly by the delegates.

24 January 1992

Environment

Ottawa, Quebec, the Cree and Inuit agree on an environmental review process for the \$12.6 billion Great Whale hydroelectric project currently under construction in Quebec. Under the agreement, environmental and native groups will receive \$5 million to finance their interventions, and a series of public hearings will be held to examine possible alternatives. Finally, upon examination of all the issues, a recommendation will be made as to the acceptability of the project.

28 January 1992

Aboriginal Peoples

— *Justice* —
Manitoba

Justice Minister Jim McCrae rejects Manitoba's aboriginal justice inquiry recommendation for a separate legal system for natives. McCrae makes it clear that the federal government is not likely to change the constitution to accommodate such a system. He does promise, however, to make improvements so that natives in conflict with the law are better served by the present system.

28 January 1992

Health Policy

Federal and provincial health ministers meet in Banff and approve an eight point set of policy directives including:

- establishing rigid health-care budgets;
- relying less on the present fee-for-service method of paying doctors;
- eliminating the physicians monopoly in certain procedures;
- developing national clinical standards designed to eliminate unnecessary medical treatments;
- reducing post-graduate medical positions by 10 percent; and
- restricting the number of immigrant doctors.

The ministers hope that these measures will help to reduce skyrocketing health-care costs.

30 January 1992
*Federal-Provincial
Fiscal Relations*

Federal Finance Minister Don Mazankowski announces that Ottawa plans to give an extra \$622 million to the seven poorest provinces over the next two years. The Atlantic provinces, Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan will receive the money under changes to the equalization formula. Quebec will receive \$198 million, Saskatchewan \$60 million, Manitoba \$55 million, New Brunswick \$39 million, Newfoundland \$31 million, and Prince Edward Island \$5 million.

31 January-
2 February 1992
*Constitutional
Change – Public
Conferences*

The third federal constitutional conference, "Renewal of Canada: The Economic Union," is held in Montreal. Delegates reject most of the federal government's proposals which they feel would give Ottawa too much power over the economy. There is wide support for a social charter to be included in the constitution, and the idea of Canada as an economic and social union finds favour with the delegates. Ultimately, as important as the economic and social issues are, the consensus remains that most important is the preservation of the Canadian political union.

7-9 February 1992
*Constitutional
Change – Public
Conferences*

The fourth federal constitutional conference "Renewal of Canada: Identity, Rights and Values" is held in Toronto. The prevailing feeling is that of goodwill as delegates fully support the need to recognize Quebec as a distinct society. Participants also endorse the idea that the Aboriginal Peoples' inherent right of self-government should be entrenched in the constitution. Due to the complexity and importance of the issue, delegates recommend that a special conference be held dealing exclusively with aboriginal rights.

10 February 1992
*Economy –
First Ministers'
Conference*

Canada's first ministers (absent Premier Bourassa of Quebec) meet with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in Ottawa to discuss the economy. They agree to hold further ministerial meetings on training, the social safety net, interprovincial trade barriers, external trade, agriculture, fisheries and capital spending for roads and sewers. The first ministers will meet again next month.

10 February 1992
*Free Trade –
 Canada-U.S. –
 Disputes*

A preliminary ruling, released by the U.S. Customs service, contends that more than 96,000 Honda cars produced in Alliston, Ontario in 1989 and 1990 do not qualify as being North American-built under the Free Trade Agreement. The cars were exported to the United States duty free. If the preliminary ruling is confirmed, Honda will have to pay \$22 million in back tariffs. In Barrie, Ontario, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney accuses the Americans of harassment and orders Canadian Ambassador Derek Burney to launch an appeal under the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

11 February 1992
*Free Trade –
 Canada-U.S. –
 Disputes*

Canada wins a victory when a panel of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade finds that American states unfairly restrict the distribution of Canadian beer and wine. Ironically, last December another GATT panel found that the provinces unfairly restricted the sales of American beer in Canada.

12 February 1992
*Free Trade –
 Canada-U.S. –
 Disputes*

In light of the recent GATT ruling on the distribution of American beer in Canada, provincial trade ministers meet and decide to begin removing internal barriers that restrict the movement of domestic beer among the provinces. It is hoped that this will help Canadian breweries compete with the expected influx of cheaper American beer to Canada.

13 February 1992
Election Reform

The Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, set up in 1989 and headed by Pierre Lortie, tables its report in the House of Commons. Among the Commission's recommendations are:

- shorter election campaigns;
- limited advertising by lobby groups;
- guaranteed representation in the Commons for Aboriginal Peoples;
- staggered voting hours across the country to reduce the time difference between the closing of polls in the east and west;
- banning the publication of polls in the last two days of a campaign;
- lifting the limit on liquor sales on election day;

- allowing workers to take a leave of absence to run as a candidate;
- setting up mobile voting booths to facilitate voting for the disabled; and
- making it easier for parties and candidates to obtain public financing.

Although the Commission's recommendations are not binding on the government, Conservative House Leader Harvie Andre promises to set up a special parliamentary committee to examine the report.

13 February 1992
*Constitutional
Change; Social
Charter*

Ontario tables its proposal for a social charter with the parliamentary committee on constitutional reform. The main features of the NDP government's proposals are to expand section 36 of the constitution, which also guarantees equalization payments to Canada's poorer provinces, to require governments to provide primary and secondary education, protect the environment, and ensure universal access to health care, housing, food and other necessities of life. These principles would be monitored by an independent commission, but would not be enforced by the courts. The Ontario proposals would also provide constitutional protection for intergovernmental agreements for financial arrangements.

14-16 February 1992
*Constitutional
Change - Public
Conferences*

The last of five Renewal of Canada constitutional conferences is held in Vancouver. Delegates examine findings from the four earlier regional meetings and recommend:

- distinct society status for Quebec,
- the inherent right of aboriginal self-government,
- reform to the Senate to make it elected, effective and more representative, and
- a commitment to social goals.

Participants fail to find a way that would give Quebec more powers to protect its distinctiveness and at the same time satisfy the rest-of-Canada's desire to maintain a strong central government. Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark announces that a conference dealing specifically with aboriginal issues will be held 14-15 March.

15 February 1992
Aboriginal Peoples
 – *Nova Scotia*

The federal government signs an agreement with the government of Nova Scotia to allow the Micmacs in Cape Breton to form their own police force. The all-native police force will provide services to all Micmac communities. Ottawa agrees to pay 52 percent of the cost and Nova Scotia the remainder. The agreement comes in the wake of the Royal Commission investigation into the wrongful conviction for murder of Donald Marshall Jr., a Micmac Indian.

26 February 1992
Social Assistance –
Reforms

Federal Health Minister Benoît Bouchard announces that Ottawa will not introduce the long-promised national child-care program. Instead the federal government will proceed with a tax-based child benefit package geared to an estimated 3.1 million low- and middle-income families. The new package will replace the universal family allowance system.

1 March 1992
Constitutional
Committees –
Beaudoin-Dobbie

The Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons, led by Conservative Senator Gérald Beaudoin and Conservative MP Dorothy Dobbie, presents its report in the Commons. The all-party committee of 10 senators and 20 MPs held public hearings across the country and examined hundreds of submissions, as well as the results of the five Renewal of Canada conferences, before arriving at the following conclusions:

- Satisfying Quebec must be a priority. Quebec's traditional veto over constitutional change must be restored and its distinctiveness — defined by language, culture and civil law — enshrined in the constitution.
- Quebec should be able to negotiate an agreement with Ottawa on cultural jurisdiction and to improve provincial participation in broadcasting.
- The Supreme Court of Canada should be entrenched, including a guarantee of three judges from the Quebec civil bar.
- Through negotiated agreements with Ottawa, the provinces should be given the opportunity to assume responsibility for regional development, energy, mining, tourism, forestry, recreation, housing, family policy and urban affairs.

- The provinces should be able to opt out of federal shared-cost programs, with compensation.
- The Senate should be elected, effective and equitable.
- Aboriginal Peoples' inherent right of self-government should be enshrined in the constitution and aboriginal representation in the reformed Senate guaranteed.
- An economic union should guarantee the free flow of people, goods and services across Canada.
- A social covenant should make governments responsible for the provision of health care, education and social services.

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney praises the report, while Quebec's Premier Robert Bourassa expresses his disappointment, contending the proposals illustrate a "domineering" federalism. Bourassa says he remains optimistic that a satisfactory solution will be reached but warns that time to reach a constitutional deal is running out. Elsewhere, the reaction is mixed. Ontario reacts favourably while the western provinces, Newfoundland and the Assembly of First Nations Grand Chief Ovide Mercredi express some reservations.

6 March 1992
Fisheries

Fisheries Minister John Crosbie announces that all commercial salmon fishing in Newfoundland, with the exception of Labrador, will be banned for five years to protect dwindling resources. Fishermen affected by the ban will be eligible for part of a \$40 million federal-provincial compensation package.

6 March 1992
*Free Trade –
Canada-U.S. –
Disputes*

In a preliminary ruling, the U.S. Commerce Department finds that Canadian provinces unfairly subsidize lumber through low stumpage fees on Crown land. Until the final decision, expected later in the summer, the ruling requires importers of lumber from British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and Alberta to post a bond promising to pay a 14.48 percent duty. Lumber from the Atlantic provinces and Saskatchewan remains exempt from duty, as the industry there was judged to be too small to have a significant impact on the U.S. market.

- 10 March 1992
Constitutional Committees – Alberta
- Alberta's constitutional all-party committee issues a report. The committee supports Quebec's quest for distinct society status in language, culture and civil law but only if this does not lead to special powers. The committee feels that any special powers granted to Quebec beyond control over culture, language and law, should be offered to other provinces as well. The report also endorses aboriginal self-government and a Triple-E Senate.
- 10 March 1992
Education – Alberta
- Alberta's Premier Don Getty agrees to comply with a 1990 Supreme Court ruling and introduce legislation giving the province's francophones their own school boards and, in effect, control over French-language schools.
- 12 March 1992
Constitutional Change
- Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark meets with provincial (except Quebec) and territorial intergovernmental affairs ministers as well as with representatives of the four major national aboriginal organizations. Together they agree to a "multilateral," negotiation process which will take place over the next ten weeks. The main objective of the negotiations is to produce a constitutional reform package acceptable to all Canadians.
- 18 March 1992
Environment
- Meeting in Vancouver, federal and provincial environment ministers agree to speed up elimination of ozone-depleting chemicals. Recent findings indicate that the atmosphere's protective layer is thinning faster than anticipated. Following the meeting, federal minister Jean Charest announces that the production and importation of the offending chlorofluorocarbons (CFC) will now be phased out by 31 December 1995 instead of by the year 2000. In addition, all provinces agree to begin CFC recycling and recovery programs by the end of this year.
- 19 March 1992
Environment
- The House of Commons passes environmental assessment legislation which has been before Parliament since June 1990. The legislation sets out rules by which major projects affecting areas of federal jurisdiction, such as dams or paper mills, can be assessed. Claiming it invades provincial jurisdiction, the Quebec Legislature unanimously condemns the federal legislation. The bill is

supported by the federal Liberals and Conservatives while the NDP and the Bloc Québécois vote against it.

24 March 1992

Telecommunications

Ottawa sells its 53 percent stake in Telestat Canada to Alouette Communications Inc., a consortium of 11 major telephone companies, and Spar Aerospace Ltd. giving the telephone companies a virtual monopoly over the telecommunications industry. The agreement gives Telestat exclusive rights to provide fixed-satellite services in Canada or between Canada and the United States for the next ten years.

24-25 March 1992

*Economy –
First Ministers’
Conference*

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney meets with the provincial premiers in Toronto. Quebec’s Premier Robert Bourassa does not attend but is represented by Finance Minister Gérard-D. Levesque.

The first ministers agree to dismantle interprovincial trade barriers within three years. They also agree to work together to prevent “destructive competition” among provinces for new investment.

27-30 March 1992

*Aboriginal Peoples
– Constitutional
Change*

The Native Council of Canada Constitutional Review Commission reports to the First Peoples’ Congress. In its report the Commission makes a broad set of recommendations including:

- entrenchment of the inherent right of Aboriginal Peoples to self-government;
- constitutional protection of the principles of equity of access to implementation of rights for all Aboriginal Peoples; and
- inclusion of the Métis in section 91(24) of the constitution.

The Commission also feels the following elements should be included in the Canada Clause:

- recognition of Aboriginal Peoples as the original peoples of Canada;
- recognition that the treaties are the source of French and British rights and institutions in Canada;
- any referral to language and culture must also include land, resources, and political institutions; and
- the obligation of Parliament and the government of Canada as well as of the Aboriginal Peoples and

governments to protect and promote their original jurisdiction over lands, languages, cultures and institutions.

31 March 1992
*Free Trade –
Canada-U.S. –
Disputes*

Federal Trade Minister Michael Wilson announces the end to barriers imposed on imported beer within three years. On 25 October 1991, a panel of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade ruled that Canadian provinces unfairly priced and distributed imported beer. Wilson also asks the provinces to eliminate interprovincial barriers on the distribution of beer by 1 July 1992. Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and the two territories say they will comply.

31 March 1992
Energy – Quebec

In Montreal, Quebec Energy Minister Lise Bacon announces changes to the planned development of the Great Whale hydroelectric project in northern Quebec. Citing the deferral of a \$17 billion export contract with New York State, Bacon announces that the project will now be broken down into three phases. Phase one is scheduled to begin in the fall of 1993 and to be completed by the year 2000. Projected completion of phases two and three is set for 2005 and 2008 respectively. On 27 March 1992, New York Governor Mario Cuomo announced that because of new conservation measures and independent power production, New York State would not need to purchase additional power from Quebec until the turn of the century. Lise Bacon blames the Cree for New York's decision. Aboriginal groups have long been opposed to the development of the Great Whale.

1 April 1992
*Constitutional
Change –
Referendum*

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney tells the Commons that he is prepared to hold a national referendum on Canadian unity if the first ministers fail to reach an agreement before the 31 May 1992 deadline. Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa says that he does not oppose a national referendum but reminds Ottawa that he is committed to holding his own referendum in Quebec and will not be bound by the results of any national vote.

2 April 1992
*Constitutional
Committees –
British Columbia*

British Columbia Legislature's Special Committee on Constitutional Matters, chaired jointly by J. MacPhail and D. Lovick, presents its report. The committee endorses:

- an elected Senate with equal representation from five regions — British Columbia and the Yukon, The Prairies and the Northwest Territories, Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces;
- the right to opt for exclusive provincial jurisdiction over labour training, regional development, harbours, inland and costal fisheries and small business development; and
- recognition of Quebec as a distinct society but without special status.
- recognition for the rights of minorities in British Columbia.

7 April 1992
*Environment –
Saskatchewan*

In Regina, the federal government announces plans to rewrite part of the Rafferty-Alameda dam project's federal licence. Last September a federal review panel recommended the change to the licence to ensure that no water from the project was diverted to the United States. The panel's recommendations have been accepted by Environment Minister Jean Charest. Last October, a Federal Court Judge ruled that the recommendations did not take into consideration the economic aspects of the project, which is again being challenged by two Saskatchewan farmers who will lose part of their land to the development.

15 April 1992
*Constitutional
Change*

The multilateral meetings on the constitution continue. Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark reports, following a ministerial level meeting in Ottawa on the issue of Senate reform, that three options are being considered: an equal Senate with limited powers, an equitable Senate, and complete abolition of the Senate (which would be replaced by a new House of the Provinces). Other issues yet to be resolved:

- power sharing between Ottawa and the provinces;
- distinct society status for Quebec;
- aboriginal self-government; and

21 April 1992
Aboriginal Peoples
 – *Constitutional*
Change

- the social charter.

Clark again urges Quebec to end its boycott of federal-provincial meetings and join the discussion.

The Assembly of First Nations releases a report following six months of testimony from natives concerning their place in Canada. Among the recommendations in the report are:

- Aboriginal People should be recognized as a distinct society and their languages should have equal status with English and French;
- the Charter of Rights should not override aboriginal law;
- natives should have the exclusive power to tax themselves; and
- no megaprojects should be constructed without the full consent of the Aboriginal Peoples.

The report also indicates that Aboriginal People want assurances from Ottawa that in the event of any devolution of powers to Quebec they would continue to deal directly with the federal government on issues concerning them.

22 April 1992
Aboriginal Peoples
 – *Land Claims* –
Northwest
Territories

The Gwich'in Indians become the first members of the Dene Nation to sign a land-claims deal with Ottawa. Under the terms of the agreement, signed in Fort McPherson by Indian Affairs Minister Tom Siddon, the Gwich'in will receive title to 24,000 square kilometres of land in the northwestern corner of the Northwest Territories and northeastern Yukon as well as \$75 million over 15 years for education and culture. The Indians will also co-manage 60,000 square kilometres of land with the federal and territorial governments.

23 April 1992
Labour Standards

Federal and provincial labour ministers meet in Toronto, agreeing on the need to harmonize health and safety laws in order to increase protection for workers and provide more uniform standards across the country. It is felt that greater harmonization will also save money and result in less confusion.

25 April 1992
*Free Trade –
Canada-U.S. –
Disputes*

Ottawa and Washington sign an agreement in principle to speed up the removal of provincial barriers to U.S. beer by September 1993. Ottawa originally planned to phase out tariffs by 1995, to give the Canadian beer industry a chance to adjust to the competition. The Americans complained and threatened to retaliate by imposing duty on Canadian beer sold in the United States. The compromise allows Canadians to reserve the right to set minimum prices in return for speeding up the process.

30 April 1992
*Constitutional
Change*

Participants in the multilateral meetings on the constitution in Edmonton agree to four of the five key elements in the failed Meech Lake Accord. Quebec has always insisted that unless the Meech Lake demands were met it would not join in further unity discussions with the rest-of-Canada. The participants agree to:

- distinct society status for Quebec;
- greater provincial control over immigration;
- the right of provinces to opt out of new federal-provincial cost-sharing programs with compensation; and
- Quebec's right to have three Supreme Court judges.

The issue of a veto for Quebec over future constitutional changes has not yet been agreed to. Alberta together with several other provinces demands Senate reform as a precondition to any further discussions concerning a veto for Quebec. The leaders also agree in principle to a social charter and economic union provisions in the constitution. They would also allow the territories to become provinces by simple agreement with Ottawa.

4 May 1992
*Northwest
Territories –
Land Claims*

A plebiscite on a proposed boundary to divide the Northwest territories is approved by voters by a narrow 10 percent margin. The vote is split along regional lines as the Inuit of the eastern Arctic, where the territory of Nunavut is to be established, vote overwhelmingly in favour of the division. In the western Arctic the vote is "no" by a margin of three to one. Federal Northern Affairs Minister Tom Siddon appears satisfied with the results and says he expects that Nunavut will be created by 1999. The agreement reached last year with the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut guarantees the Inuit

- \$1.5 billion over 14 years and ownership of 350,000 square kilometres of land.
- 4 May 1992
Social Assistance
- As part of budgetary measures announced in February, the federal government announces a \$500 million program to help needy children in Canada. Welfare Minister Benoît Bouchard says the program is designed to help women and young children who live in poverty. It will provide \$50 million for prevention of child neglect through such programs as nutritional guidelines for children; \$73 million for promotion, through educating pregnant women on how to reduce the risk of low birth-weight babies, and \$17 million for protection such as helping the RCMP with maintaining the missing children registry. A further \$200 million will be allotted to local groups delivering health and social programs to high-risk children and \$160 million is for programs in aboriginal communities.
- 7 May 1992
Justice
- Claude Morin, former intergovernmental affairs minister in René Lévesque's PQ government, admits to being an RCMP informant between 1974 and 1977. Morin denies giving the RCMP any information about the Parti Québécois and says he agreed to meet with the RCMP only to find out about their activities in Quebec. Morin also says that he informed Lévesque and former Justice Minister Marc-André Bédard about his contacts with the RCMP in 1975 and 1977.
- 8 May 1992
*Environment –
British Columbia*
- A Federal Court of Appeal rules that Alcan may resume construction of a \$1 billion hydroelectric project in northern British Columbia. The court overturns a lower court decision which, in May 1991, ordered Ottawa to hold environmental hearings into the Kemano 2 megaproject. Justice Louis Marceau said Ottawa does not have to review every project that may have environmental effects on areas of its jurisdiction. Ottawa first approved the project in September 1987 and exempted it from independent review in October 1990.

8 May 1992
*Social Assistance
Job Training –
New Brunswick,
British Columbia*

Federal Employment Minister Bernard Valcourt and New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna announce two joint pilot projects designed to help people get off welfare. The first, called New Brunswick Works, is a six-year \$177 million shared-cost project which will provide welfare recipients with literacy and skills training. The second, a \$50 million project, will be implemented in New Brunswick and British Columbia. It is designed to supplement wages of welfare recipients who take low paying jobs. If the projects prove to be a success they will be extended to other parts of the country.

15 May 1992
*Constitutional
Change –
Referendum*

A bill allowing a national referendum on constitutional reform is introduced in the House of Commons. The results of a vote would be non-binding. House Leader Harvie Andre says the bill does not mean that a national referendum will necessarily be held, but that Prime Minister Mulroney needs the ability to call one should the situation warrant it.

15 May 1992
*Free Trade –
Canada-U.S. –
Disputes*

The U.S. Commerce Department sets the duty on Canadian softwood at 6.51 percent, down from the original 14.48 percent imposed in a preliminary ruling in March 1992. Trade Minister Michael Wilson says the duty on Canadian softwood is offensive and unjust. Wilson tells a news conference in Ottawa that Canada will appeal to a Canada-U.S. free trade panel.

21 May 1992
*Environment –
Alberta*

Federal Environment Minister Jean Charest announces that Ottawa will not shut down development of the Oldman dam in southern Alberta. In July 1991, a federal environmental review panel had recommended shutting down the project until all environmental and social concerns were addressed. Ottawa's position is that environmental issues are being sufficiently addressed and that there is no reason to stop development of the dam. The lobby group "Friends of the Oldman River" say they will seek an injunction from the Supreme Court of Canada to stop development.

30 May 1992
*Constitutional
Change*

Five days of bargaining on constitutional reform with federal, provincial, territorial and aboriginal representatives conclude in Toronto without agreement. The main stumbling blocks are the issues of Senate reform, a

constitutional amending formula, division of powers and a proposed economic union. However, a degree of consensus was achieved on:

- distinct society status for Quebec;
- Aboriginal Peoples' inherent right of self-government;
- more provincial control in the areas of immigration, job training, culture, housing, tourism, forestry, mining and municipal and urban affairs;
- the right of provinces to opt out of new federal cost-shared programs with compensation;
- three Supreme Court seats for Quebec; and
- some form of social charter.

The ministers will meet again in Ottawa on 9 June, to try to secure a final agreement.

4 June 1992
*Constitutional
Change –
Referendum*

The House of Commons approves the federal government's referendum bill by which it could hold a national vote on constitutional reform. However, Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark stresses that the federal government would much prefer to reach a constitutional settlement through a negotiated agreement with the provinces and aboriginal leaders.

12 June 1992
Telecommunications

In a landmark decision the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission decides to break a monopoly of federally regulated telephone companies in Canada over long-distance telephone services. The 4 – 1 ruling will make it possible for other companies to offer competing services. Already two companies, Unitel Communications and BCRL, are set to enter the \$7.5 billion annual long-distance market.

15 June 1992
*Constitutional
Change –
Senate Reform*

Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark indicates that despite the break in constitutional talks of 11 June 1992, multilateral negotiations at the official level are continuing. Currently under discussion is a new proposal from Saskatchewan's premier Roy Romanow on Senate Reform. The proposal would give each province an equal number of seats but larger provinces would have more power through weighted voting on most issues. Also being considered is a federal proposal, favoured by Ontario, of a regionally equal Senate.

17-18 June 1992
Health Policy

Federal and provincial health and finance ministers meet in Ottawa to discuss the state of the \$60 billion national health-care system. To save money the provinces agree to review the work of doctors and hospitals in order to eliminate unnecessary waste and inefficiency. The ministers reaffirm their commitment to universal medicare.

25 June 1992
*Free Trade –
Canada-U.S. –
Disputes*

The U.S. International Trade Commission votes 4 – 2 to uphold a 6.5 percent duty on softwood lumber imported into the United States from Canada. Canada plans to appeal the ruling, which applies to British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec. British Columbia is responsible for 80 percent of the lumber shipped to the United States and its subsidies have been calculated at 7.95 percent compared to .01 percent for Quebec. Federal and provincial officials have agreed to let the provinces appear separately before the appeal panel.

25 June 1992
*Supreme Court –
Taxation*

In a unanimous decision the Supreme Court of Canada rules that the 7 percent Goods and Services Tax, introduced in January 1990 by the federal government, is legal. Alberta, supported by British Columbia and Ontario, had challenged the validity of the tax on constitutional grounds arguing that it infringed on provincial jurisdiction. Following the Court's decision, Revenue Minister Otto Jelinek said he hoped that the provinces would now begin to harmonize their sales tax with the GST.

29 June 1992
*Constitutional
Change –
Senate Reform*

Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark and nine provincial premiers agree to meet on 3 July 1992 to try and resolve the Senate reform issue, which continues to be a major obstacle on the path to a constitutional agreement. Alberta, Newfoundland, Manitoba and Saskatchewan support equal representation for all provinces while the federal government, Ontario and Quebec favour weighted but not equal representation for the smaller provinces. Negotiations continue.

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