

commitment it will have the continued support of the NDP for the government's constitutional package?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member has the sequence wrong.

**An hon. Member:** The parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Trudeau:** My understanding is that the Minister of Justice said Friday that he would not support that amendment. I understand the Leader of the NDP made his "threat" on Sunday. I can tell you, Madam Speaker, what our position was; I said it a moment ago. Any amendment which will bring us greater support, I will accept. Any amendment which will erode the support, including that of the NDP, I will not accept.

**Mr. Beatty:** Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister, of course, is wrong. It was the Acting Minister of Justice who, on Friday, said the government would support the amendment. It was not until yesterday evening at eight o'clock that the Minister of Justice indicated that he was betraying the commitment that was made.

In view of the statement just made by the Prime Minister that any amendment which would win increased support from Canadians he would support, and in view of the fact that the government is prepared to change its position for the support of 32 New Democrats, will the government listen to the voice of 64 per cent of the Canadian people who are asking the Prime Minister to bring the Canadian constitution back to Canada unamended, and to make substantive changes here in Canada and not in the parliament of Westminster?

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trudeau:** Madam Speaker, the first part of the hon. member's question I would have to defer to the Minister of Justice, who has left the House temporarily.

**An hon. Member:** He is over there.

**Miss MacDonald:** He said yesterday he would answer last night.

**Mr. Trudeau:** I understood him to say that it was on Friday that he indicated that he could not support the property rights amendment.

As to the other part of the question, Madam Speaker, it seems to me its very phrasing indicates that if we went this course we would not get greater support for the resolution. On the contrary, we would be destroying the resolution.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Trudeau:** I see an hon. member waving at somebody in the gallery. I do not know what his point is, but I am telling him that if he is suggesting that we withdraw the resolution in order to get his support, I say no, we will not do that.

**Mr. Beatty:** Listen to Canadians for a change.

### *Oral Questions*

**Mr. Trudeau:** We would amend the resolution to get his support, as we did with the NDP and as we did with some of the provinces.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### SUGGESTED CHANGE OF POSITION BY MINISTER OF JUSTICE

**Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Madam Speaker, perhaps I can help the Prime Minister by directing a question to the Minister of Justice, because he does not seem to fully appreciate what is going on here or the import of this question. The minister has indicated, and it is now a matter of public record, that he and the Prime Minister on Friday decided that they could not accept the Conservative property rights amendment. That was the same day that the Solicitor General, as Acting Minister of Justice, gave the exact opposite commitment in committee when he indicated that he would accept it.

**Mr. Nielsen:** On behalf of the government.

**Mr. McGrath:** We moved to another clause when that commitment was made and we agreed to withdraw.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I think it would be wise just to proceed to the question; the preamble is too long and the hon. member is getting into proceedings of the committee.

**Mr. McGrath:** Madam Speaker, I certainly do not want to transgress the rules of the House.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. McGrath:** But I say to you with great respect that this goes beyond the committee; this goes right to the heart and soul of Parliament. That is what we are talking about—

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. McGrath:** —as well as the accountability of this government to Parliament and whether or not we can accept the government's word. That is what we are talking about, Madam Speaker.

Did the minister meet with the Prime Minister on Friday within minutes after the solemn undertaking was made to the committee by his colleague acting on his behalf?

**An hon. Member:** It was Thursday.

**Mr. McGrath:** Can he tell us from where the opposition came, because there was no opposition coming forward until the weekend? The Leader of the NDP himself did not speak until Sunday. Where did the opposition come from? What caused him to change his mind on Friday?

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development):** Madam Speaker, on Friday night, probably nine or ten hours after the meeting, I was talking by telephone to the Prime Minister in light of the developing opposition. We recognized that I could not have