

*Oral Questions*

priority of French in Quebec but not the prohibition of another language. Will the Government do that today?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs and Acting Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question, and the House knows that this is a matter of very real importance to all Members of the House. The House would expect the Government of Canada to consider very carefully any response that we would want to make.

As I think the Hon. Member may know, while it was planned this morning to table the legislation in the Quebec National Assembly that had not occurred as of a couple of minutes ago. I think the Government of Canada would want to reserve any action or comment on the question until we have the opportunity to see the legislation actually tabled in the Quebec National Assembly.

**Mr. Allmand:** Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Minister knows, the Premier of Quebec made his intentions known yesterday although he had not tabled the legislation.

[Translation]

PROTECTION OF LINGUISTIC MINORITIES—  
GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East):** Mr. Speaker, we must remember that Section 2 of the Meech Lake Agreement stipulates that linguistic minorities must be protected. And Section 42 of Bill C-72 stipulates that the federal Government, with the provinces, must support the protection of linguistic minorities in Canada. Under these circumstances, is it not true that the federal Government has the responsibility to communicate with the Government of Quebec concerning the measures proposed by Mr. Bourassa yesterday?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Indeed, Mr. Speaker—and I apologize for being away for the first question—I already communicated with Mr. Bourassa yesterday and I told him the position of my Government and of this House on such a matter. I expressed the desire, the wish, that the Government of Quebec could find a formula, as the Supreme Court suggested, whereby the preponderance of French at all times in Quebec would be assured together with the respect of minorities and their freedom of expression, as the Supreme Court wanted and the Quebec Charter states. That was the wish and the desire that I expressed

to Mr. Bourassa yesterday, no doubt on behalf of all Hon. Members. I have not yet seen the Bill that will be brought forward, but we will no doubt see one in the coming days.

[English]

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce):** Mr. Speaker, if I understand correctly, the Prime Minister has done what I asked the Secretary of State for External Affairs to do. I want to make sure that I understand correctly. He seems to have said that he did ask the Prime Minister of Québec to consider implementing legislation that would respect the judgment of the Supreme Court.

I want to bring to the attention of the Prime Minister that nine days ago we celebrated the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which, in Article 19, declares “freedom of expression” as a basic fundamental freedom. As I just said in my previous question, the Canadian Charter, the Meech Accord, and Bill C-72 all provide for the protection of language minorities.

If these documents mean anything to the federal Government, then surely it should approach the Québec Government to have them respected.

[Translation]

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the long and noble tradition of the fairness of Quebec to its English-speaking minority is well known. I think that the situation of anglophones in Quebec could in many respects serve as a model for the other provinces in the treatment of their French-speaking minority.

That being said, we showed leadership with Bill C-72 and the Meech Lake Accord, which protect the rights of minorities wherever they are, and I conveyed this feeling to Mr. Bourassa. The Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce knows very well that Mr. Bourassa has been deeply troubled by the conflicts which he went through. I told him that I hoped his Government would find a way to respect the two elements or parts of the Supreme Court decision. That was our position and I think it remains the position of this Parliament. We shall see what comes out of the Bill that will be presented. But it is important to stress that Quebec has no lessons to learn from anyone about how it treats its linguistic minorities.

We always hope for even more generous treatment for all minorities throughout Canada, but I think that