

Oral Questions

Alberta's Liberal senators should take note of the prevailing democratic winds. Stan Waters' first duty is to encourage other senators to not stand in the way of democratic reform of the Senate. Albertans would like to see the election of at least seven new senators from Alberta five years from now in a newly reconstituted Senate.

Some people and parties talk a lot about Senate reform. Our government is actually doing something about it.

Congratulations to the Prime Minister, Premier Don Getty and other First Ministers for their tremendous accomplishments.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

MEECH LAKE ACCORD

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

In recent days, the aboriginal peoples of Canada have expressed deep concern and, in fact, a deep sense of grievance, about the outcome last weekend of the First Ministers' Conference.

I understand that the Minister of Justice and other ministers met the leaders of aboriginal peoples in Ottawa yesterday. I would like the Deputy Prime Minister to tell us what was the outcome of the meeting. Has a result satisfactory to these native leaders been achieved? If not, what does the Government of Canada intend to do to respond further to the deep concerns and the deep sense of grievance of aboriginal peoples of this country as a result of the outcome of last week's constitutional conference?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, first, I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition would acknowledge that the Meech Lake Accord and the document that was signed last week contain some very important provisions with respect to the aboriginal people.

Therefore, it is certainly in everyone's best interests to see that the Meech Lake Accord and the documents that have been signed by the First Ministers would be ratified as quickly as possible.

With respect to the meeting that took place yesterday, not only Senator Murray but the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development attended the meeting of Indian leaders. It was a very friendly and amicable meeting. The Indian leaders laid out their positions very clearly. The ministers listened and took cognizance of their concerns. They have undertaken to deal with each of them in a very specific way.

I can advise my hon. friend that discussions with respect to the points that were raised yesterday are ongoing at the present time.

[Translation]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Premier of Newfoundland has invited all provincial premiers and the Prime Minister of Canada to address the Newfoundland House of Assembly on the 1987 constitutional amendment.

I therefore ask the following question: Will the Prime Minister himself go to Newfoundland to speak there and if so, when will he go?

[English]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister and the Premier of Newfoundland have been in contact almost on a daily basis discussing this very important issue.

As the Prime Minister indicated in response to a question earlier this week, if there was a feeling that his presence would be helpful in the ratification of the Meech Lake Accord, clearly he would be prepared to visit Newfoundland. I think that is still a matter for consideration.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I have a further question for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Legislators in Manitoba have said that they believe that the Constitutional Amendment of 1987 will not be ratified by their legislature by June 23. I ask the Deputy Prime Minister if the government is of the view that