

I think my hon. friend can be fully satisfied, and I think my hon. friend has indicated her satisfaction in the past, with the value of this approach and the fact that it in no way erodes or diminishes those rights.

**Ms. Jewett:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that the First Ministers will not clarify in the Accord what they say they intended to put there on women's equality rights.

#### REQUEST FOR MEETING OF CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERTS

**Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, representatives of national women's organizations have requested a meeting of their constitutional experts with the Government's constitutional advisers to discuss the potential effect of the Accord on women's equality rights.

Will the Prime Minister facilitate such a meeting between the constitutional experts in the national women's organizations and the Government's experts, and will he do so this week?

**Mr. Broadbent:** Say yes.

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of meetings in this regard. As I say, the weight of the evidence clearly supports the view subscribed to by the majority in the Meech Lake Accord report.

**Ms. Jewett:** I am asking for a meeting.

**Mr. Mulroney:** It is indicated here that the New Democratic Party members of the joint committee do not believe that the linguistic duality of the distinct society interpretation clause abrogates, supersedes or overrides—

**Ms. Jewett:** I am asking about a meeting.

**Mr. Mulroney:**—sexual equality rights or any other rights guaranteed by the Charter. I share that view.

**Ms. Jewett:** Why don't you answer the question?

**Mr. Mulroney:** In the process of completing the Constitutional Accord which brings Quebec in, it also allows us to have many meetings dealing with some fundamental issues. I will be happy to meet with my hon. friend or to follow up on any suggestion that is made at that time. But I think first things first. I think we must proceed with the Accord and take some important decisions in regard to the nationhood of Canada.

**Ms. Jewett:** You didn't listen to the question.

**Mr. Broadbent:** He didn't get the question.

#### PROTECTION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

**Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday when discussing the Meech Lake Accord the Prime Minister stated in the House with respect to rights provided in the Canadian Charter:

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—fundamental assurances can be given as to the protection of those rights without any changes being made in the wording of the distinct society clause.

What fundamental assurance is the Prime Minister referring to? Assurances of politicians are not binding in a court so why won't the Prime Minister commit them to writing in the Accord itself for the judges and the courts to follow, to ensure that individual rights and freedoms guaranteed to all Canadians, including women, are not affected by the Meech Lake Accord?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** That matter has been frequently and appropriately responded to by me and others in this House.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Member for Mount Royal on a short supplemental.

#### CHARTER OF RIGHTS

**Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal):** Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that that is not the view of everyone in Canada and I will proceed to ask a supplementary question.

The Prime Minister knows that by including multicultural and aboriginal rights in Section 16 of the Meech Lake Accord he may be excluding or diminishing other rights. Why will the Prime Minister not clarify that the Accord does not take away rights granted to Canadians in the Charter? Why will he not include a brief statement that the Meech Lake Accord does not weaken the Charter of Rights? Why don't you answer the concerns of Canadians in that regard?

● (1500)

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend says that the Meech Lake Accord does not reflect the views of everyone in Canada. I am aware of that.

**Mrs. Finestone:** I asked about the Charter of Rights.

**Mr. Mulroney:** Perhaps my hon. friend should keep Party disputes off the floor of the House of Commons.

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

**An Hon. Member:** Cheap shot.

**Mr. Penner:** Tell us about Pat Nowlan.

**An Hon. Member:** What are the assurances you were talking about yesterday?

**Mr. Speaker:** I am sure Hon. Members would want to extend the appropriate courtesies. I would ask the Right Hon. Prime Minister to answer the question and ask Hon. Members to give the Prime Minister a chance to answer.

**Mr. Mulroney:** Mr. Speaker, I say with respect that we do not accept in any way the legal opinion of my hon. friend. That opinion has not been accepted by the majority of members of the Meech Lake Accord report which is submitted here.