

Oral Questions

understand correctly, there is a request by Mr. Ryan, the leader of the Liberal opposition party in the Quebec National Assembly, that the Government of Canada be prepared to negotiate with the government of Quebec to enable the participation and involvement of Quebec in a full constitutional settlement.

Does the Prime Minister intend to respond positively to that request by Mr. Ryan and to do everything possible to involve the province of Quebec in a full constitutional solution?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I honestly am not clear on what the Leader of the Opposition intends when he says insisting "on a full constitutional solution".

There are three areas on which the government of the province of Quebec indicated that it disagreed. I have indicated that we are prepared to look for some accommodation in those three areas providing they do not result in a position which would break up the accord reached with the nine provincial governments last week, and providing they ensured fairness for all Canadians.

I am really repeating my previous answer to the member from Saint-Jacques, but if the Leader of the Opposition has some further supplementary I would be happy to entertain it.

INCLUSION OF QUEBEC IN CONSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, naturally we would like to have the opportunity to see as soon as possible the resolution which the Government of Canada I understand is drafting as a result of the accord signed between the Prime Minister and nine of the premiers. What I am interested in is having an undertaking from the Prime Minister that he will vigorously and fully pursue an agreement with the province of Quebec and that he will not place any artificial obstacles in the—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark:—any artificial obstacles in the path of an agreement. Would the Prime Minister give his undertaking on that; and also an undertaking that he would be prepared to respect what I understand to be the spirit of the request of Mr. Ryan, that spirit being that all efforts be made to include the province of Quebec in a constitutional agreement signed by and supportable by the other premiers?

● (1430)

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I believe my previous answers and what I have been saying since Thursday noon should satisfy the Leader of the Opposition as to the spirit and the willingness we have had about including Quebec in a final solution. In so far as the first point about the federal government drafting an amendment to the resolution is concerned, I want the Leader of the Opposition to take note that it has been the joint work of the federal and provincial officials to try to put into legal texts the

agreement that nine provinces and the federal government reached last Thursday and Friday.

As to his other point about not putting up artificial barriers, I do not know what the Leader of the Opposition would define as an artificial barrier. For instance, on education and linguistic rights for minorities what would he consider an artificial barrier—the federal government trying to ensure that English-speaking Canadians in Quebec have the same rights French-speaking Canadians in the other provinces now have? If we insisted on that, would that be an artificial barrier in the eyes of the Leader of the Opposition?

EQUALITY OF THE SEXES

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I suppose that so long as we have an implicit undertaking from the Prime Minister that he will respect the spirit sought by Mr. Ryan of an honest attempt to include the province of Quebec in this accord, we will have to wait to see the resolution which comes forward.

However, let me ask a specific supplementary question of the Prime Minister in relation to the resolution that is being drafted. Would the Prime Minister confirm that in the original accord, signed by himself and the nine premiers on Thursday, the opt-out or override provisions do not apply to the guarantee of equality of male and female persons which, the Prime Minister will recall, was set down deliberately in a separate section, Section 28, of the original resolution?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I think this is the question asked by the hon. lady in the New Democratic Party the other day. I had a chance to look this up since then, as I said I would—

Mrs. Mitchell: Hon. lady?

Mr. Trudeau: If some can say "hon. gentleman", is it prohibited to say "hon. lady"?

Mrs. Mitchell: Hon. member.

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, would you like me to call her something else?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: My understanding is that in the work done by the federal and provincial officials the "notwithstanding" clause would indeed apply to that particular section.

Mr. Rae: It shouldn't.

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. member says it would not.

Mr. Rae: I am saying it shouldn't.

Mr. Trudeau: Oh, well, we know that the Leader of the Opposition has always argued that we should have a charter made in Canada by Canadians. Now that we will have our own Constitution, now will be his chance to have a charter