

*Oral Questions*

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Mulroney:** Mr. Speaker, it is therefore comforting to see in the House of Commons French- and English-speaking Canadians of various origins who are here because they are Canadians, who come from different regions and who represent different provinces. But they are here in the House because they are all Canadians. I think it is unacceptable that the Leader of the Opposition should be making distinctions pertaining to the integrity of citizenship. We are all Canadians, all proud to be Canadians, and the Leader of the Opposition ought to refrain from spreading discord over major national issues.

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister would know that, both inside and outside the House, I have always advocated a united country where we are all Canadians.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Gray (Windsor West):** This is why we supported the Prime Minister's own suggestion to strike a special committee to study the companions resolution of New Brunswick Premier McKenna. I am asking the Prime Minister why he is not prepared to say, in his name and on behalf of all his Cabinet colleagues, the same thing that the New Brunswick Premier said, that as far as he is concerned it is not a matter of choice between Quebec and Newfoundland and that he is prepared to choose Canada. Why can the Prime Minister not give the same answer here?

[English]

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, surely the Leader of the Opposition is not suggesting that he has the slightest doubt in his mind as to whether I and all my colleagues stand for a united Canada. Surely there can be no doubt in his mind about that.

Given what my hon. friend has mentioned, it is true that in 1980 when the question was put to Quebecers: "Do you support federalism, or do you support sovereignty association", almost 50 per cent of the French speaking voters of the province of Quebec voted on the yes side. They voted for sovereignty association. They lost in that referendum. The option was either to let them be on the outside forever as losers or to try to bring the population that had voted yes, namely voted against

Canada, back into a generous and open-hearted Canadian family.

After the 1981-82 experience, the members and the leaders of all parties began the Meech Lake Accord. It is true that there are members who sit on this front bench who supported the yes side in the referendum, and I am proud to have them here as members of the Government of Canada.

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

**Mr. Mulroney:** What they did in 1984 and what they did in 1988 was to say: "While we did vote yes for sovereignty association, we believe that circumstances have changed and there is now a chance for a new and a better Canada. It is true that we French Canadians who voted against Canada want to be part of a new Canada".

That is why all members of this House virtually without exception supported the Meech Lake Accord, because it brought Canadians together and it made that 40 per cent of the vote, but 50 per cent of French speaking Quebecers, feel first-class citizens of Canada.

That is why the Meech Lake Accord was such an important national statement of unity. That is why it was so important that it was supported by all three major political parties. That is why I know that my hon. friend will salute the presence in this party and perhaps in others of people who may have voted in a different way, in different circumstances, but today are doing their very best to build a brand new Canada in which they can feel first-class citizens so that we can get on with building another kind of Canada into the next century.

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

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**GOODS AND SERVICES TAX**

**Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South):** Mr. Speaker, all Canadians are looking for the Prime Minister's assurance that no matter where they are from in Canada they are also first-class Canadians.

My question is for the acting Minister of Finance. The government has cut off debate on the goods and services tax. It has embarked on a propaganda campaign trying to sell the goods and services tax to Canadians when it has not been fully passed by Parliament.

I would like to know whether the acting Minister of Finance will admit to Canadians that the only reason they are trying to ram through this goods and services tax