

*Oral Questions*

in a national debate affecting a very important issue to all Canadians from one coast to the other.

● (1420)

## PROCESSES TO ADDRESS VARIOUS CONCERNS

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, as the Deputy Prime Minister knows, I have always been supportive of the Meech Lake Accord as a basis for bringing Québec into our Federation as a full partner under the Constitution Act, 1982, and I still am.

I also told the Prime Minister, during the two interventions I made in Parliament on the subject, of areas which we believe need to be strengthened, including the Charter of Rights, the future of our northern Territories, the protection of our aboriginal peoples, more certainty about the scope of federal spending power, and guarantees on minority language rights.

Does the final text take into account the concerns I have raised? If not, what process will be followed to allow those concerns to be addressed openly, completely and publicly by this House of Commons so that Canadians can be fully apprised of the basic law of our country before it is finally adopted?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased, as I am sure are all Hon. Members, at least those on this side of the House are, that the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition agrees with the spirit of the Meech Lake Accord. We have not seen the final draft and it is, therefore, very difficult to answer precisely the questions which the Right Hon. Leader has put. However, it is my understanding that in the 1981-82 case there were amendments entered into and agreed to.

I repeat that we will be discussing these things with House Leaders presuming, of course, that an agreement is reached tomorrow. I can assure the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition, pursuant to the statements which have been made by the Prime Minister, that we will certainly allow Members every opportunity to become engaged in this very important debate.

[*Translation*]

## REQUEST FOR CLEAR LEGAL TEXT

**Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides):** In the absence of the Prime Minister, this question is also directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and concerns the Meech Lake Accord. Hon. Members are aware of my position both inside and outside the House and I do not intend to change it. However, there are many people who, as I did when I spoke in the House on May 11, have raised the question how the provision relating to spending power is to be interpreted.

Tomorrow, the Prime Minister of Canada and the provincial Premiers are to meet to draft a legal text that will embody the Accord. Can the Deputy Prime Minister give the House and all Canadians the assurance that the legal text the Prime Minister intends to propose to his provincial counterparts will

be clear and precise, to avoid any ambiguity regarding the federal Government's capability to propose and implement national programs, and furthermore, to allay the concern that was raised as a result of faulty interpretation by certain provinces, and especially Quebec, the concern that the federal Government might be able to intervene without prior consultation in areas under exclusive provincial jurisdiction. Can the Deputy Prime Minister give the House the assurance that the legal text will be quite clear in that respect?

[*English*]

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I am not going to engage in a debate on specifics at this particular time. That is precisely why at a very early opportunity we triggered a debate in the House of Commons to get the precise views of Hon. Members opposite and those on this side of the House on the principles of the Accord.

With regard to interpretation, there are certainly Premiers who are putting forth certain interpretations which might be somewhat at variance with that which was agreed upon. All those things will be discussed tomorrow. Naturally, the views, opinions, and the admonitions that the Hon. Member raised in a very eloquent speech in the House will certainly be taken into consideration. That is precisely why we wanted that debate at a very early opportunity.

● (1425)

[*Translation*]

## RIGHTS OF FRANCOPHONES OUTSIDE QUEBEC—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides):** Mr. Speaker, I had some trouble following the Deputy Prime Minister's reasoning, because what it comes down to is that we can address the subject any number of times in the House—God knows I have not been remiss in this respect—but we do not have a chance to make any specific proposals. So we have to depend on the information the Government is willing to give us. What it boils down to, Mr. Speaker, is that the Government is conducting these negotiations and it refuses to answer.

● (1430)

Mr. Speaker, in the Meech Lake Accord, a number of other issues were raised. I was in Northern Ontario on the weekend, and I met a lot of francophones living outside Quebec. I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he can give the House and all Canadians, especially French-speaking Canadians living outside Quebec, the assurance that the legal texts that will probably be produced tomorrow at Meech Lake or some other venue, will not only guarantee the rights of francophones outside Quebec but also guarantee that those rights can be reaffirmed and that it is the role of the Parliament of Canada and the provinces to promote the rights of francophones outside Quebec. Francophones outside Quebec want to be full-fledged citizens, and they want to be able to