

to the Official Languages Act, to do the Conservative dinosaurs a favour, and I would like to know why today, the Deputy Prime Minister remains silent when faced with questions about this document.

[English]

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that the Hon. Member did not finish his question on the same high level he started it. I think everyone in the House recognizes that indeed the Deputy Prime Minister does deserve the respect of this House, partly because he is in touch with Members of Parliament on both sides and consults with them.

Let me simply put the Hon. Member's fears to rest. Next Wednesday I am going to appear before the committee. I will at that time table on behalf of the Government proposals which I think will be seen by any dispassionate observer as a package of reasonable amendments which will clarify and strengthen the Bill, and draw on the representations made before that committee.

I think all Members of Parliament would agree that is the way Parliament should operate. We should be sensitive to representations made in committee and try to strengthen a Bill in every way we can.

[Translation]

INSISTENCE WITH RESPECT TO DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, to us Francophones, reasonable means... This is really the limit! We are sick and tired of the way this Government thumbs its nose at Francophones across Canada. And I would have said exactly the same thing if the Deputy Prime Minister had risen in his seat to answer the question. I am giving him a chance to maintain his integrity and his respect for the House.

We have here seventeen pages of amendments prepared by his office. These amendments are Government amendments, not the work of a couple of Tory backbenchers. These are amendments that go against the interests of Francophones outside Quebec.

I would like to know why the Deputy Prime Minister will not answer these questions today. Why is he remaining silent?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I agree, and I think the Hon. Member from Montreal—Sainte-Marie raised the issue, that Francophones outside Quebec are very disappointed, and the reason is that 25 per cent of the Hon. Member's Liberal colleagues voted against the historic Meech Lake Accord. It was a sad day for Quebec and for Canada's Francophones, and the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie had the courage to state publicly his deep disappointment in the position taken by his Liberal colleagues who voted against this historic document that brings Quebec back into the Canadian constitutional fold, and that was my first point.

Oral Questions

Second, as far as...

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry, but the Right Hon. Prime Minister realizes the question is about amendments to Bill C-72. Perhaps the Right Hon. Prime Minister would like to continue his reply.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I believe—but the new assistant Leader of the Liberal Party, who has taken the Senator's place, won't listen. I'll have to answer quickly because his job might not last that long. I'll answer right now before his Leader changes his mind again.

Regarding Bill C-72, Mr. Speaker, I am informed that amendments have been prepared by both Government and Opposition Members. I am even told that the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier...

An Hon. Member: Yes indeed!

Mr. Mulroney: Yes indeed! So the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier is presenting amendments in support of the Bill. We will see next Wednesday, but I think the Hon. Member can rest assured that in any case, Bill C-72 will pass. It will receive the approval of this House, as an instrument of national unity. Subsequently, we still have to consider the deep disappointment of Quebecers and Francophones in Canada in the position taken against the Meech Lake Accord by his Liberal colleagues.

INTEGRITY OF BILL C-72—POSITION OF PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister and deals with the role of the Deputy Prime Minister with respect to the amendments to Bill C-72, the Official Languages Act.

Can the Prime Minister say whether the provisions of the Bill have been maintained or is the Deputy Prime Minister allowed to become the leading dinosaur of the Conservative Party by introducing amendments to weaken Bill C-72?

[English]

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have answered that question a number of times. Even the distinguished Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie referred to the sense of fairness of the Deputy Prime Minister. If the Member waits until Wednesday he will see, I believe, amendments presented by the Official Opposition—

Ms. Copps: I thought you did not know about any amendments.

Mr. Mulroney: The Member for Hamilton East says I didn't know about the amendments. No, the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier just told me and so I am aware he is going to bring forward amendments. I am informed that others will be brought forward.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair has exercised considerable care in the questions on this matter. I would ask the Hon. Member for