

*Oral Questions*

Prime Minister to take the opportunity to explain the controversial statement made by his environment minister last Friday to the effect that Canada will have to choose between Newfoundland and Quebec. Can the Prime Minister explain this to us?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition talked about those who make statements encouraging dialogue and tolerance in Canada. Quite obviously, he is not talking about the completely unacceptable statement made by his member from Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte who yesterday caused an unacceptable situation by insulting and offending a member of this government and this House. But, knowing the parliamentary spirit of my friend from Newfoundland, I am told that he quickly retracted that disgraceful comment about a member of this House.

As for the comments made by the Minister of the Environment, this is the second or third time that the Leader of the Opposition has come with the same question. I told him the other day that the minister had indeed said that, but that he also said something else which, taken in context, could only lead a reasonable person to conclude that the Minister of the Environment favours national unity and the inclusion in this country of all provinces, be it Quebec or Newfoundland and Labrador. I find it deplorable under such circumstances that, despite my specific answers to the Leader of the Opposition, he persists in raising this question so as to spread misunderstanding here in the House and throughout Canada.

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

**Mr. Mulroney:** And I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to stop acting like an agent of disunity, because that is not like him. I would ask him to stop making such statements that are offensive, inaccurate and insulting to all members of this House.

• (1420)

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I deplore the tone of the Prime Minister. I gave him an opportunity to speak for a united Canada.

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

**Mr. Gray (Windsor West):** I gave him an opportunity to speak for a united Canada and he missed it. His answer to me was crass politics, and I would suggest I speak on behalf of all Canadians when I say that we must deplore the tone and gist of his response today.

[*English*]

On November 23, 1984 the Office of the Prime Minister sent a letter to all ministers and deputy ministers which said in part:

—Ministers, not only individually but collectively as Cabinet, will continue to be the primary spokespersons for the Government of Canada.

On Monday when I asked the Prime Minister about the statement of the Minister of the Environment that “we can now imagine a scenario where English Canada will have to choose between Quebec and Newfoundland”, he replied to me in part by saying: “The Minister of the Environment also said nobody thinks Newfoundland should leave Confederation”.

I ask the Prime Minister exactly what did the Minister of the Environment mean, speaking for himself and I presume for the government when he used the words: “We can now imagine a scenario where English Canada will have to choose between Quebec and Newfoundland”.

I invite the Prime Minister, in a spirit of unity and reconciliation, to explain those words.

[*Translation*]

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition urges me to speak for a united Canada. The Meech Lake Accord proposes a united Canada, at last. Will all Liberals support the Meech Lake Accord?

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

**Mr. Gauthier:** Yes!

**Mr. Mulroney:** The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier says yes, and I believe him because he has been a faithful supporter in all votes in favour of the Meech Lake Accord. He knows very well that, when the people of Quebec heard the promise of the Prime Minister of Canada in 1980, they knew a no vote meant renewed federalism. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier understood, as did all Quebecers, that it meant a Constitution including Quebec, not with Quebec on the sideline.