

Oral Questions

The Chief Justice said this was "a political trial". Indeed, the reason for the case was because the provincial government had refused to negotiate land claims in the first place.

This ruling, which may be appealed, should not be used by either the B.C. government or the federal government to avoid negotiating and resolving the land claims issue.

Both governments have an opportunity and an obligation to show leadership by ending years of discrimination and mistreatment of aboriginal people in Canada by taking the questions of self-government and land claims seriously.

tations of all Canadians. I am sure all people will strive to achieve that goal.

[*English*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, from time to time, all members of this House have honest differences, but there is one thing upon which most of us can agree and that is that we have a great country. It is worth saving.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. Copps: Clearly, in saving this country there is a role for the federal Parliament to play in examining the specific issues of division of power.

I ask the Acting Prime Minister in place of the Prime Minister: When will the government allow the Parliament of Canada to have a real say in the constitutional issues that are facing our country at this critical time?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as I said in French a few minutes ago, I think every member of this House would agree with the preamble of my hon. colleague with respect to the importance and greatness of this country and how so many people outside would like to be part of it.

With regard to the specific question, the Prime Minister has answered that question on many occasions. He has indicated that he has set up various commissions or committees in order to look at the constitutional question and to find, particularly, a better amending formula.

Parliament, as usual, will take its part in the debate. As suggested by the Prime Minister last week I believe, if the hon. member wants to use an Opposition Day to discuss this question, she is welcome to it.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the approach of an all-party parliamentary committee to examine all the issues relating to the Constitution, not merely the amending formula.

For the Prime Minister or representatives of his government to suggest that the deed could be done on a single Opposition Day is simply senseless. I would like to ask the Acting Prime Minister once again. The constitutional clock is ticking. The best chance that we have for a national consensus to save this country must emanate from a public parliamentary process.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

THE CONSTITUTION

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister, I direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister. We live in the freest, most democratic and most varied country in the world. Hundreds of millions of people would like to live in Canada. Frustrations certainly run deep, but then opportunities are unlimited. As members of the Parliament of Canada we are duty-bound to take every means necessary to renew the federal system. In addition to what is already being done, Parliament must advocate specific propositions on all aspects of constitutional reform. With that in mind, when will the Prime Minister finally widen the mandate of the Beaudoin-Edwards Committee?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I should think that all members of the House agree with the preliminary remarks of my colleague concerning the importance of Canada and how hundreds of thousands if not millions of people in the rest of the world would like to live here and continue to build this country as we would all like Canada to be. With respect to the specific question of my colleague, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said on many occasions that indeed he had struck appropriate committees to examine the issue and urge all participants to come up with a constitutional amendment which would meet the expect-