

Oral Questions

LENGTH OF RATIFICATION PROCESS

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Prime Minister about a statement made in the Senate on May 26 by the Senate Leader in which he expressed the personal opinion, as reported at page 1051 of *Hansard*, that it will be possible for all Legislatures to have passed these resolutions before the summer recess.

Was the Government Leader in the other place speaking for the Government, or is it an understanding that this process may and should take longer than one month?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): I do not know, Mr. Speaker. I did not see that statement by the Government Leader in the Senate. However, I have just indicated my view to the Leader of the Opposition as to the appropriate manner in which it ought to be handled.

The day after there were a number of questions, including two very incisive ones from the Member for Saint-Denis. In response thereto I think I covered the matter quite clearly and signalled my intentions with regard to how we could proceed if an accord were concluded. An accord having been concluded, we will follow through.

[Translation]

CONSTITUTIONAL RESOLUTION—CREATION OF NATIONAL COMMITTEE—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister, who indicated that the Government wants to hold hearings on the constitutional resolution. Have the Government and the provinces considered the possibility of having a committee that would include both federal and provincial Members, in other words, a truly national committee?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there has been no formal consideration of that concept. In the course of our discussions, the idea may have been mentioned by some of the Premiers. For instance, the province of Manitoba, if I am not mistaken, has a special procedure in connection with certain "mandatory" parliamentary commissions. I believe the Manitoba Government has already made a formal commitment to set up a parliamentary committee in Winnipeg. Which means that this particular jurisdiction will necessarily be involved. Our intention would be, after consultation with the Deputy Prime Minister, the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party, to set up the appropriate mechanism for this House.

[English]

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, from the Prime Minister's answer I am not quite sure whether he was ruling out the possibility of having, on such an issue, a departure from traditional processes which could include a committee with federal representatives and representatives

from provinces who would conduct these hearings. I understand that the Prime Minister is leaving open to discussion this possibility to be dealt with by the House Leaders.

Has the Government given any final consideration to the question of when it plans to bring a resolution before Parliament?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, our intention is to bring forward the resolution soon, but at the same time to have the Deputy Prime Minister negotiate with his colleagues with regard to the parliamentary mechanism about which we have been talking. It is our intention to have that parliamentary committee apply to the Parliament of Canada. That is our intention and there has been nothing at variance with that discussed with the Premiers.

TIMING OF INTRODUCTION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I have a final question on the process. The Prime Minister says "soon". Does he mean by that later this week or, for example, next week?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we just signed it this morning at about six o'clock.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Maybe we can do it this afternoon.

Mr. Mulroney: We would like to do it sooner rather than later.

[Translation]

POSSIBILITY OF AMENDING CONSTITUTIONAL ACCORD—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Prime Minister. When we examine the precedents concerning constitutional amendments and the way Parliament dealt with them we realize that most of the time the amendments adopted had to do with technicalities, the wording, although there have been a few substantial amendments as well. Since the Prime Minister seems to be quite prepared to hold public hearings so that Canadians may have their say, I find it rather difficult to reconcile that with the statement he made a few moments ago when he said his objective was the integral adoption of the accord he has just made with the Provincial Premiers. This is why I wonder whether he is open to the idea of amendments so that Canadians may come here to attend these hearings in the full knowledge that their endeavours may bring results, and that they are not wasting their time by coming here to make representations to a parliamentary committee.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the thrust of my response was that I was making a commitment. My objective is to recommend the adoption of the document, and that is still my intention. We will introduce it with a straightforward recommendation that the House of