

*Oral Questions*

Therefore, the belief that I have stated and the responses that I have given are perfectly consistent with that view.

We inherited the override clause. We will try at a Conference of First Ministers in the future—and Premier McKenna recommends that we proceed slowly in this regard. But, at an appropriate time, we will no doubt review the matter of the override clause, because in my judgment it is at variance with the most fundamental of our rights.

How we resolve this issue clearly will demand reason and fair-mindedness, and tolerance—and I believe that resolve it we shall, because Canadian interests can only be protected.

Minority language interests, minority rights cannot be fully developed while that 1981 override clause exists. That is my view, and that is the view of every member of this Government.

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

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** That is evidently not the view of every member of the Prime Minister's Government, because the Secretary of State does not share that view.

**An Hon. Member:** That's right; that's the point.

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

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** I listened with some interest to the Prime Minister's declaration before the House, a declaration he should have directed not at this side of the aisle but at his colleague, the Secretary of State.

If the Prime Minister felt as deeply as he says he felt, he had the opportunity, with his provincial colleagues, at the Meech Lake negotiations to have that clause removed.

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

VIEW OF SECRETARY OF STATE—RETENTION IN  
CABINET

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about here is the fact that the Secretary of State is the Minister to whom the Prime Minister has mandated the responsibility for minority language rights in this country. That is his job. That is his mandate.

So, I ask the Prime Minister how it is that he can retain a Secretary of State, in charge of protecting minority language rights in this country, who is beholden to a "notwithstanding" clause which remains in place at the expense of minority language rights?

**Mr. Clark (Yellowhead):** Don't be absurd. You are making a fool of yourself.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Yes, I admit to the Secretary of State for External Affairs that I am perhaps a little incensed, and I imagine that he is too, staying at the Cabinet table with a Secretary of State who does not want to protect minority rights.

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

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** I venture to say to the Secretary of State for External Affairs that when he held high office, as Prime Minister of this country, he would not have tolerated that view in his Government.

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

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** I ask the Prime Minister: How can any minority group in this country feel protected as long as his Secretary of State remains in this Government?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, dealing with the comments of the Leader of the Opposition with regard to Meech Lake, he knows full well—

**Some Hon. Members:** Answer the question.

**Mr. Mulroney:** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has just taken four or five minutes to ask the question. Perhaps his colleagues would be good enough to give me the opportunity to respond.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** I put forward yesterday, and again today, in both languages, the view that, in the opinion of the Chair, this is a subject that requires a dignified series of questions and a dignified series of responses.

The public is watching us. Frankly, I do not think they will have too high an opinion of us unless we show more of an understanding for the solemn obligation that all of us in this place are under in respect of a matter that means a great deal to this country. I ask Hon. Members to co-operate.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister.