

months. The committee on the reorganization plan of Bell Canada took six months. Three and a half months were spent on the Shipping Conferences Exemption Act.

Is the Prime Minister really defending his position in spending four days from the end of November until December 4 to study the final text of the trade deal which, we understand from Mr. Reisman, may run to 1,200 pages?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is, of course, misleading the House when he states that I defended the proposition that four days would be available. That is an absolutely fallacious statement. I made no such statement at all. The Leader of the Opposition, rather than indulge in this type of half truth, should stand up and tell the truth, because I made no such statement at any time. On the contrary, I indicated yesterday that ample time would be provided to all Members of the House to discuss this important national issue.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): How much?

Mr. Mulroney: Now he says, "how much".

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): How much?

Mr. Mulroney: The Leader of the Opposition just stated that I said four days, and I said no such thing.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The end of November is when it is brought in. December 4 is when the committee—

Mr. Axworthy: How much time are we going to get? Five days, six days?

Mr. Speaker: The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, yesterday or Monday, all Members of the House gave a richly deserved compliment to the Hon. Member for Cambridge who chaired the committee on Meech Lake in very difficult circumstances on a most complex issue. The members of that committee did a tremendous job in a matter of some weeks.

There is ample time for a parliamentary committee to do the same thing on the question of trade. I would hope that the right hon. gentleman would be encouraging the participation of ordinary Canadians in this process, rather than discouraging, which is precisely what he is attempting to do now.

[Translation]

INQUIRY HOW DETAILED COMMENT CAN BE MADE ON SPECIFIC SECTIONS OF AGREEMENT WITHOUT HAVING DEFINITIVE TEXT

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary committee that examined the Meech Lake Accord had a definitive text. That is the point we are trying to make.

After more than two years of negotiations, lawyers for the two Governments have yet to agree on the exact wording of the

final text. And now the Prime Minister expects the parliamentary committee to examine the entire text between the end of November and December 4.

The provincial governments still do not know what kind of programs and periods of adjustment will be provided for the clothing, footwear, agricultural and furniture industry. So how can they give detailed comments on specific items of the Agreement without having the final text?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, Alain Dubuc said recently in *La Presse*, in referring to the position taken by the Leader of the Opposition on this question, that "his verbal excess was in reverse proportion to his comprehension of the issues".

I think the Leader of the Opposition is again showing his lack of comprehension with respect to a complex issue. The day after the Agreement in principle was signed, it was tabled in the House. There was considerable debate in parliamentary committees in Quebec. The Liberal Government of Ontario is sending a committee of six Ministers across the province to collect people's views, notwithstanding the fact that the Government of Ontario does not have a final text. However, we know perfectly well that the final text will reflect all the demands that were negotiated and the Agreement in principle that was signed.

I think it is altogether normal and democratic that the House of Commons should receive the views of Canadians on the initial document, and in fact actively solicit such views, either positive or negative. It is a democratic exercise that is entirely consistent with our democratic principles in this House.

• (1425)

[English]

PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister indulged himself in the citation of a personal comment. It is obvious that he wants to leave the House in the same position in which he entered it, namely, as president of an American subsidiary.

Everybody in the House knows that the Prime Minister supports this deal and that I oppose it. The only difference is that I am not afraid to give Canadians the time to study it, the time to express their views, and the time to form an opinion. That is the difference between the Prime Minister and myself.

The Prime Minister is forcing a parliamentary committee to conclude its hearings by early December because he wants to meet an American deadline of January 2. He has caved in on every other point to the Americans. Does he really have to force this Parliament to meet an American deadline?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!