

constitutional changes". He said that provincial hearings may also be held.

Would the Prime Minister take the House into his confidence as to his commitment, if any was given, to the Premiers to hold public hearings and to allow the parliamentary process to operate in some detail?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think in a response the day after the original Accord at Meech Lake to a question from my friend, the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis, I signalled the intention of the Government to have full debate, full participation, in the analysis of any accord that might emerge. Inasmuch as one has emerged, there is a pre-ordained parliamentary process that must be followed in regard to the House and I have signalled to the Premiers my intention to make full use of an appropriate parliamentary vehicle to ensure public participation in and consideration of this important matter.

• (1425)

RATIFICATION PROCESS—ACCEPTABILITY OF AMENDMENTS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in commenting after the meeting this morning at which the 10 Premiers and the Prime Minister signed the Accord, Premier Peterson stressed, again according to the Canadian Press report, that from here on in the constitutional debate will be slow and methodical and, if the public hearings point out flaws in the deal, the First Ministers can meet again to make changes before Parliament and provincial Legislatures formally ratify the amendments.

During the Prime Minister's necessary absence the last two days, I put questions to his colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister, attempting to ascertain from him whether amendments would be acceptable in a parliamentary committee and whether the Government would look constructively at suggestions made both in this House, in the other place, and indeed by members of the public who may be deeply concerned with the process.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, a few moments ago, over at the Conference Centre, the First Ministers signed an Accord, a provision of which was an undertaking by all of the First Ministers to bring forward the document to their respective Legislatures and, in my case, to the House of Commons, and to recommend it for acceptance by their respective Legislatures. In my case, it is my intention to bring forward the appropriate documents pursuant to the parliamentary requirements and I will bring them forward with the full recommendation that the House of Commons, after consideration, adopt the document in its entirety. I believe it represents a tremendous effort by 11 First Ministers over an extended period of time, and that would be my recommendation.

As I have just indicated, there will be an appropriate parliamentary hearing of this matter and that too is in train

through the Deputy Prime Minister and will be part and parcel of this review.

[Translation]

PUBLIC HEARINGS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's words do not exactly reflect the thinking of Premier Peterson of Ontario and Premier Pawley of Manitoba. The Prime Minister knows perfectly well that the Quebec National Assembly held public hearings on the agreement in principle concluded at Meech Lake on April 30. In the circumstances, could the Prime Minister give the House the assurance that public hearings on today's Accord will also be held here on Parliament Hill, with sufficient latitude so that Canadians can express their views on the substance of the Accord?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of parliamentary hearings would be, of course, to invite Canadians to express their views on the substance of the Accord. As far as I am concerned, after living with this initiative for more than a year, I can only say that, as a parliamentarian, I would table the recommendation suggesting the adoption of the Accord by the Parliament of Canada. And we would then see what a parliamentary committee would do. In any case, if there is a commission of any kind, it will have a specific task, and we will wait for the results. As for my commitment and that of all the Premiers, it is to bring the resolution before our respective legislatures, with a recommendation for approval of the full text.

[English]

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATIVE MEASURE

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to be sure about what it is the Prime Minister has just said in a manner that was quite difficult to understand. Is he saying that the resolution will be introduced like any other government measure which members of the Conservative majority will be expected to support? Will it be a measure which is really a form of executive federalism, or will we have a form of federalism in which the Canadian people can participate within which government Members, like members of all Parties, will approach the hearings with an open mind about ways in which our Constitution can be carried forward from the achievement today of agreement by First Ministers to a consensus among the Canadian people?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what could be more in keeping with our parliamentary traditions than having the Government House Leader sit down with the House Leader of the Official Opposition to attempt to determine the appropriate manner of dealing with this, consistent with our parliamentary traditions. That is exactly what the House Leader of the Government will do.