

—we are not abstaining from the great issues of the day. The government has taken a position in regard to the unity of Canada.

Canadians want to know why the Prime Minister says one thing on the floor of the House of Commons, while a representative of his government and his party does a completely different thing by abstaining before the Belanger-Campeau commission. Why the double standard, Mr. Prime Minister?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend from Toronto was here yesterday when I indicated that when the question on sovereignty for Quebec came up, Mr. Hogue, the member for Outremont voted solidly against it, along with other members of the commission, and it was defeated 17 to 15.

I also indicated to my friend something that he knows. He knows that Jean-Pierre Hogue is a very strong and very firmly committed French Canadian in favour of Canada's unity—so much so that it brings laughter from the Bloc Québécois. They don't like strong French Canadian people who believe in Canada's unity as Mr. Hogue does.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: They are going to find out, this little group over here on my right—and I am being charitable because Easter is coming—that this group is going to find out—

[*Translation*]

—there are a lot more French Canadians who believe in Canada than French Canadians who believe in destroying a great country like ours.

[*English*]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, all I can say is if he was a strong national federalist he should have stood the course right until the end and cast his ballot on behalf of the country that we all enjoy and the one we all love.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

• (1440)

Mr. Speaker: The question is getting very close to imputing the motive of an hon. member. I am sure the hon. member would want to be careful.

Oral Questions

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Speaker, I return to the Prime Minister who also said yesterday, and I quote: "We have a Canadian agenda. We are not bound to anybody's agenda or anybody's time frame."

I ask the Prime Minister this. If he was so intent to pursue a truly Canadian agenda, why did the government representative abstain and thereby fail to stand up for a more realistic time frame that would give the Canadian agenda a better chance to succeed? Why condone a race against the clock?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I thought my hon. friend, as a strong committed federalist, would take pleasure in the fact that a member, a colleague of accomplishment, such as Jean-Pierre Hogue, defended the interests of Canada, represented the Parliament of Canada with great dignity. Jean-Pierre Hogue is a very strong Quebecer and a very strong Canadian. He believes very strongly in the unity of Canada.

As the Speaker has implied, it is very dangerous for anyone to impugn the patriotism of a member of Parliament. I would remind my friend in any case, and I say this with some affection, to remember, as someone else said, that patriotism is the final refuge of a scoundrel.

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ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, we learned in *Le Soleil* this morning that once again the Prime Minister and at least two of the premiers are secretly discussing a national referendum on the new amending formula.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Skelly (Comox-Alberni): Has the Prime Minister involved the leaders of Canada's aboriginal peoples in any high-level discussions regarding the Constitution and, knowing the dangers of excluding them, why not?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will tell Bob Rae of the indignation of the hon. member of the fact that he and I have been speaking. I will tell Bob the next time rather than call me to call you.