

*Oral Questions***THE CONSTITUTION**

MEECH LAKE ACCORD

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said that a Constitution should bring Canadians together and should be accepted by all Canadians.

My question is to the Prime Minister. Since it is now clear that most Canadians outside central Canada reject the Meech Lake Accord and that public opinion will make it politically impossible for certain provinces to accept the Accord, will the Prime Minister now urge negotiation of a new Accord that will address the concerns of these provinces as well as the concerns of Quebec?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised to hear the comment from my hon. friend. The Premiers of Canada met in Edmonton under the chairmanship of the Premier of Alberta, a province represented by my hon. friend. They said in 1986 that it was very important, given the incomplete nature of the work in 1982, that the Premiers request the federal Government engage in what was referred to as the "Quebec round" to bring Quebec back into Confederation.

That having been accomplished, it was their hope and that of the Leaders of every Party of this House, that we would then move on in a second round to deal with those matters of substance and concern to other Canadians. For example, the question of Senate reform is of great interest to the people of Alberta and western Canada. But clearly it was the considered view of all of the Premiers, particularly those from western Canada, as well as myself and the Leaders of the political Parties in this Chamber, that these other matters could not be dealt with properly until such time as the constitutional loop was closed.

Quebec was brought in on terms that were both reasonable and fair. That is what the Meech Lake Accord was all about. That is why it was endorsed by 10 premiers representing four different political parties from British Columbia to Newfoundland and Labrador. That is why it was endorsed very enthusiastically by the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the NDP and myself as Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

I want to tell my hon. friend that among other things, under the previous Constitution there was an inequality *vis-à-vis* the provinces where some provinces had vetoes and others did not. Alberta is now a first class province under the Meech Lake Accord and it was not before.

SENATE REFORM

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In my maiden speech a couple of months ago I said something about executive federalism. Yes, in fact the Premier of Alberta did endorse the Meech Lake Accord. The people of Alberta did not.

We in Alberta are also interested in seeing a meaningful Senate reform proposal from this Government, and we have not seen such to this date. We are looking forward to seeing that.

The Prime Minister will be aware that a recent poll in the Montreal *Gazette* shows that even in Quebec, only 44 per cent of the people actually support the Meech Lake Accord. Since these are hardly the kinds of numbers necessary to provoke a national unity crisis, why does the Prime Minister not urge the Government of Quebec to also show some flexibility instead of just twisting the arms of the smaller and politically weaker provinces?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend says that while the Premier of Alberta endorsed the Meech Lake Accord, the people of Alberta did not. On November 21 last, there was a general election and the Progressive Conservative Government which stood for a strong support of the Meech Lake Accord won 25 out of 26 seats in Alberta. That is a major endorsement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Now my hon. friend refers to a very fundamental question of Senate reform which all of us I think desire to bring about in Canadian federalism. Senate reform can only be achieved if Quebec is brought back into the Constitution. It cannot be done without that condition precedent.

The Premier of Alberta understood that, the Leader of the Opposition understood it, the Leader of the NDP understood it. I think my hon. friend understands full well that if Alberta desires Senate reform, which it does, and if Senate reform would be beneficial to Canadian federalism, which it indeed would, then first and foremost we must find terms on which Quebec can honourably rejoin the Canadian constitutional family. We have