

Oral Questions

What does the Prime Minister do now? After all, it is his responsibility and he got us into this mess in the first place. He said he rolled the dice and he even bragged about it, and now we see the result: a complete mess. What is the Prime Minister going to do now?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will read for my friend from Winnipeg the formal undertaking that says:

The Premiers of New Brunswick, Manitoba and Newfoundland undertake to submit the *Constitution Amendment, 1987* for appropriate legislative or public consideration and to use every possible effort to achieve decision prior to June 23, 1990.

That was 10 days ago, and notwithstanding that formal undertaking on a matter of the greatest concern to Canada that deals with our unity and the ongoing well-being of this nation, the Government of Manitoba and the Legislature of Manitoba has not even yet taken formal cognizance of the matter so that members can rise and speak and vote yea or nay on it.

I say that the question of leadership is important in the province of Manitoba. The Liberal member there is asking me where I stand. My stand on the Meech Lake Accord is very well known. I have been standing in the same place on it for three years, which is more than some people who aspire to lead political parties can say.

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

As he has indicated in his remarks, the document signed on June 9, 1990 committed the Governments of Newfoundland, Manitoba and New Brunswick to "use every possible effort to achieve decision prior to June 23, 1990". Despite this, the government has indicated its intention to exert further efforts on these provinces by a motion in this House.

Does the Prime Minister not trust the commitment of those first ministers from those provinces? What is he trying to accomplish by this? It is the Prime Minister himself who chose the unrealistic deadline despite the warnings about that deadline. What is the Prime Minister's purpose in trying to bring forth further pressure on the people of Manitoba and Newfoundland?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my purpose in causing the government to

introduce this resolution is to invite the House to do that which it was called upon to do in previous circumstances.

Ms. McLaughlin: This House?

Mr. Mulroney: Before the hon. member arrived in this House there was a motion in regard to Manitoba. It was supported and seconded in a very eloquent speech by the member from Fort Garry when there was a problem in Manitoba. It called upon people to stand up and be counted and to make sure that documents once signed are honoured, and that is what we want.

It was asked for in the past in regard to serious questions in Manitoba. We have a serious question now. All the Canadian people want is for parliamentarians to stand up and be counted and to make sure that this passes in Manitoba and that Canada can go on to the great work that awaits us all.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): My supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, is for the Prime Minister.

Is the Prime Minister saying that he wants this House to do something which he was evidently not able to do in his own negotiations? He rolled the dice, as he said, and set a deadline that could not be met. He is now trying to have this House pass another motion four days before the June 23 deadline.

I have asked repeatedly in the House of his government what the Prime Minister's plan is to deal with ongoing constitutional talks, and I ask the Prime Minister again today. We know what the Prime Minister's plans were in the past and they failed. What is the plan today? You owe it to the people of Canada to tell them.

Mr. Speaker: I indicated that I was going to be very careful about allowing any liberties in this exchange. I would ask the hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party to co-operate with the Chair.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I was pointing out to my hon. friend that on two occasions, some 48 hours after I first entered the House in 1983, Prime Minister Trudeau, supported by his Liberal colleagues, quite properly introduced a resolution that the House support the Government of Manitoba to cause to give effect to an undertaking that had been reached. The House spoke on this, I believe almost