

*Oral Questions*

before the committee next Wednesday. I will be presenting the position of the Government with respect to this Bill.

I can tell the right hon. gentleman that any suggestion that he has with respect to the fact that this Bill is to be weakened or to be diminished in any way is totally without foundation. He should be ashamed of himself to even make that suggestion.

[Translation]

## ALLEGED AMENDMENTS OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister a question.

Yesterday, in answer to a question from my colleague, the Hon. Member for Saint-Jacques, who wanted to know whether the Government had any amendments to propose, the Prime Minister replied, as reported on page 15579 of *Hansard*:

Mr. Speaker, I don't have the amendments here and I haven't seen them.

How can the Prime Minister explain to the Canadian people that the Deputy Prime Minister, his trusted man, had asked for and has been circulating for two and a half months a series of amendments that totally contradict the spirit of Bill C-72? How can he explain that to the House of Commons? Can he at least apologize and say that he knew what was happening around him?

[English]

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I have to say to members of the Liberal Party that I am astonished that they would raise a linguistic matter and try to impugn the integrity of one of the finest people ever to serve here, the Deputy Prime Minister.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Mulroney:** Bilingualism is a vital and sensitive part of our national well-being. It should be devised and implemented in such a way as to bring harmony and not division to the country. I regret very much the manner in which it was raised today by the Leader of the Opposition who tried to tie it into a by-election in the Province of Quebec. The unfounded accusations made by the otherwise distinguished Member for Vanier against the Deputy Prime Minister are unworthy of him and of his considerable reputation in the House of Commons.

• (1425)

**Mr. Gauthier:** Mr. Speaker, talking about credibility, talking about politicizing something, when you have had 30 or 40 dinosaurs in your Party that have been politicizing this document—

**Some Hon. Members:** Order!

[Translation]

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier knows very well the right way to ask a question. The Hon. Member has the floor.

[English]

## GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, I will rest my case on this document which I want to read to the Prime Minister. This is the document ordered by the Deputy Prime Minister.

In relation to Section 38 of the Bill it states: "This change would drop the reference to official language *communities* and as such, is inconsistent with a critical policy thrust of this Bill—to reach out and to reflect Canadian society as a whole. It undermines the link with linguistic duality as expressed in the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord, which recognizes the presence of English-speaking Canadians and French-speaking Canadians throughout the country . . ."

How can the Prime Minister blame us for asking legitimate questions about his intent, or his Party's intent, or his Government's intent in terms of official languages? Can he come across and tell us the truth?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I do not blame my hon. friend at all for asking any question that he wants. This is not only his right, but of course his obligation to do so in the House of Commons.

Where I find I have some disagreement with him is when a question is raised by a Conservative Member in respect of a Bill, that Conservative Member becomes a Neanderthal or a dinosaur. But when 25 per cent of the Liberal caucus right in front of me vote against the Meech Lake Accord, the Member says nothing.

I think that that is much more divisive and much more dangerous for national unity than a Member of Parliament raising a question, as he is supposed to, in terms of trying to improve a piece of legislation.

**Mr. Berger:** You have got it all wrong, Brian.

**Mr. Mulroney:** One of the Members who was opposed to the Meech Lake Accord says I have it all wrong. I want to tell him that the Progressive Conservative Party and Government that brought forward the Meech Lake Accord have it right, your Leader has it right, and you have it wrong.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!