

Senator Frith: Honourable senators will not be surprised, if they have been attending sessions of the Senate since the original draft accord was made public, that many reservations have emerged as to the results or corollaries following from the signing of the agreement by Quebec. Those reservations have been expressed here through questions to Senator Murray, who has tried to find answers. But understandably, he also expected us to wait until we saw the actual agreement and the provisions of the constitutional text.

We have had less than an hour, though I did see a copy of the agreement before it was tabled in the Senate, to consider the textual form that is now before us. As far as amendment is concerned, I take it that the agreement will be presented to us in the form of a resolution.

In fact, the Accord specifically provides for this process. We find, too, that the signatories, or at least some of them, foresee a long and careful—perhaps I should put the adjectives in the other order—a careful and, if necessary, long study of this document, with full participation by the people of Canada, by the legislatures of the provinces and by the Parliament of Canada. If it takes time to do so, apparently the signatories are prepared to let it take that time. Premier Peterson has said that the signatories to this agreement are prepared to listen and to take advice. In fact, Premier Peterson has suggested that the process could take up to three years.

Senator Murray: Not quite.

Senator Frith: So, honourable senators, I repeat that we should, to borrow the word used by the Leader of the Government, rejoice that we have a document signed by all 11 First Ministers. We now have to get down to work and engage in the process that all the signatories apparently want to take place to study what it means for the country. Of course, we in this chamber have a particular responsibility to participate in the amending process. We already have before us a motion that the text and the agreement be referred to Committee of the Whole Senate for study, where each senator will have an opportunity to play an individual role in this very important process.

Honourable senators, I do hope that that motion will be brought to a vote soon so that we can get down to work and see the extent to which the reservations that any of us here had, or the reservations about the Accord that were made public otherwise, can be examined in the context of detailed evidence and study.

Honourable senators, I do not want to end on a negative note, so I will again congratulate the Leader of the Government in the Senate and congratulate all of the other participants on their efforts. However, I must say that on my first read-through the many reservations I had and still have have not been assuaged. So let us get to work and find out about that through our committee. Perhaps we can be convinced.

[The Hon. the Speaker.]

QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

REQUEST FOR ANSWERS TO ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS

Hon. B. Alasdair Graham: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. It relates to a couple of written questions I placed on the order paper on February 3. As this happens to be the fourth anniversary in terms of months for these questions, I am wondering when I might expect some answers.

The first question I asked on February 3, honourable senators, concerns the LaPrade Fund. Among other things, I asked how much money is currently in the fund; whether spending for the fund is restricted to a particular area of Canada, and, if so, what are the boundaries of the area and how are such boundaries determined? As is the case with the other questions I asked, I do not think those questions should be too difficult to answer.

The other question I asked on February 3 concerns Enterprise Cape Breton. My question was:

Of the 511 offers of assistance made to industry by Enterprise Cape Breton as of October 7th, 1986, (i) how many of these offers have been accepted; (ii) what sums of money have been paid out to each individual enterprise; (iii) how many jobs are currently in place in each of such individual enterprises and (iv) what plants and how many jobs are now in place in Cape Breton as a result of the Cape Breton tax credit?

I know that Enterprise Cape Breton is very near and dear to the heart of the Leader of the Government in the Senate. I am wondering when we might anticipate answers to those questions, since they are now four months old.

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, I take some pride—which I believe is justified by the record—in the alacrity with which the government has brought in answers to most questions asked in this house. I must say that I am all the more dismayed to find that several of Senator Graham's questions have been hanging fire since early February. I thank him for drawing them again to my attention, and I will have inquiries made immediately and try to bring in replies to those questions.

[Translation]

THE CONSTITUTION

1987 CONSTITUTIONAL ACCORD—FRANCOPHONE MINORITIES OUTSIDE QUEBEC

Hon. Eymard G. Corbin: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate, whom I refer to section 2, paragraph (2) of the Schedule to the Constitution amendment, which says:

(2) The role of the Parliament of Canada and the provincial legislatures to preserve the fundamental char-