

Oral Questions

United States and it can change it. What is happening is unprecedented.

In proposed Clause 77.26, this Bill creates, for the first time in Canadian history that I can find, a Canadian offence which can be committed entirely in Canada and tried in a Canadian court for breaking an American law, present or future.

I ask the Minister of Justice, if a Canadian is charged with such an offence and tried in front of a Canadian court of violating American law, will he here in Canada have American defences? Will he be able to plead the Fifth Amendment? Will he be able to plead the U.S. Bill of Rights? If an American is charged with violating that American law in his own country, he will have those defences.

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, opposition Members, in their attempt to justify their opposition to this very worthwhile treaty which is in the interests of Canadians, are really stooping to some depths in order to make invalid points.

Mr. Kaplan: Answer the question.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: The justice critic of the Liberal Party asks me to give an answer. The answer is the question is stupid, that's the answer. There is no basis in fact. This is Canadian law, and if the hon. gentleman feels that the Charter of Rights of Canada should not apply, maybe he would want to make that a point in debate, but he has absolutely no foundation to his question and he should go back to his researchers to get a good question.

REQUEST THAT ELECTION BE HELD ON ISSUE

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I think that was a question that needs an answer, and I certainly did not get it. I would like to turn again to the Deputy Prime Minister and ask him this. We know that in spite of what the Government is saying, the agreement is falling apart and portions of it are being renegotiated. In light of that, will he take the advice of the Canadian people as demonstrated in the polls and take this issue to the people before renegotiating this terrible trade agreement?

• (1430)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, again the Hon. Member's assertion is absolutely false. The latest poll I saw says most Canadians agreed with the trade initiative signed with the U.S. That is very simply because it is good for Canada, good for all Canadians, and good for the regions. It will provide progress and prosperity for the Canadian economy. The Hon. Member, rather than trying to find ways and means to kill the initiative, should be the first to support it to ensure that Canadians will have jobs and new opportunities. That is what the exercise is all about.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF NUCLEAR POWERED SUBMARINES

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. He and the Prime Minister have time after time defended the costly and foolish decision to spend billions of dollars on nuclear attack submarines in order to protect Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. The Minister was on television again this morning offering this curious argument, to understate it.

Very serious alternative proposals have been made to deal with sovereignty in the Arctic. They involve updated sonar and other equipment, and could be undertaken without any threat of violating the spirit of the non-proliferation treaty and without extending our involvement in a potentially aggressive strategy. Given that, why has the Government come down on the side of nuclear attack submarines costing billions of dollars instead of a much less costly and saner alternative?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, there are so many false premises to the hon. gentleman's question it is hard to know where to begin.

Mr. Broadbent: Give it a whirl.

Mr. Beatty: All right, let us start first with the premise that the reason for the submarines is simply to protect our sovereignty in the Arctic. That is false. One of the questions I put to the Navy in the Common's defence committee was if the Government had decided not to allow the Navy to go into the Arctic, what would be its recommendation with regard to protecting our Atlantic and Pacific responsibilities? The answer was to purchase nuclear-propelled submarines, a second batch of frigates, and anti-submarine helicopters.

In addition to the sovereignty issue, they will give us for the first time the ability to go into our Arctic. The NDP proposed to shut Canada's Navy out of Canada's North and leave it open to others.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Beatty: That is exactly what it would do because no other vessel the Navy has can go there. Conventionally propelled submarines cannot do it. Frigates cannot do it.

The hon. gentleman suggests that instead of defending the North we should simply put in underwater surveillance systems. That would be similar to building the North Warning System to warn us of long-range bombers coming over the Pole, but getting rid of the CF-18 whose job it is to intercept them. It would be similar to saying we will put a burglar alarm in the bank but we will not bother with guards.

Some Hon. Members: Strike one, Ed.