

Oral Questions

In the memo that the U.S. lobby sent out that I referred to yesterday, and the Minister acknowledged yesterday in the House that she had read, in talking about the legislation and in collaborating with the Government, this group of American lobbyists in Canada say: "This would assist the Prime Minister with respect to the sovereignty issue in the free trade debate, the Canada-U.S. relationship issue, and the over-all question of his leadership".

Does the Prime Minister think that his Government ought to be so intimately connected to a U.S. pressure group that sees itself as aiding in his re-election?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think the weakness of the position of my hon. friend was in the preface to his question where he quoted an unidentified official who, he says, was "alleged to have said". That is the preface or the premise of the hon. gentleman's question. The preface is, of course, fragile and misleading, and the conclusion is false.

We will see who needs whom in an election campaign. We will stand on our policies and with our candidates, as I am sure my hon. friend will. But I think my hon. friend has more to do than raise unsubstantiated allegations from anonymous and unidentified people. If he has a complaint or a statement to make, let him make it to an attributed spokesman, and then we will deal with it.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I sincerely wish the Prime Minister would listen to the whole question and not just the preamble.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: It may be funny to the Prime Minister, but in my question I was quoting from a document that the Minister has. I will quote the words again, and I ask the Prime Minister to respond. This is a document prepared by a U.S. film lobby in Canada. They say they are supporting the proposed legislation because it will aid the Prime Minister in his leadership, and it will further their interests in getting the trade deal accepted.

My question to the Prime Minister is the following. Forget the alleged official, deal with the issue that the Minister has, which is a document. Does the Prime Minister of Canada believe the Conservative Party ought to be actively collaborating with the U.S. pressure group that is working against the Canadian film industry for its own political gain? That is the question.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I cannot comment on a document that comes from a third party or a lobby somewhere for which I am not responsible. I believe that that document was the one that was brought to the attention of the Minister yesterday, and the

Minister indicated that it was inaccurate and misleading. That is my information.

• (1430)

Perhaps more important than that, the Hon. Member asks me to forget the preamble to his question, to pay no attention to the preambles. The preambles are argumentative, vexatious, and misleading, and I can understand why he would not want Canadians to pay attention to them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

ALLEGED PRESENCE OF AMERICAN LOBBYISTS IN CANADA—
PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is very straightforward. According to this document—it isn't my document, it is a document the Minister has in his possession—there is a group of lobbyists here in Canada, a U.S. group, that wants to work directly on this legislation to help the present Government, and this against the interests of the Canadian film industry. The question is very simple: Does the Prime Minister agree that the present Government should co-operate with a group of U.S. lobbyists?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): What a frivolous question! I am asked whether I approve of the present Government co-operating with a U.S. lobby group, while there is no proof of any link between this lobby group and the Government. I said so in English and I repeat it in French: Such statements are false, vexatious and designed not to obtain information in the House but to get you your 30 seconds in English and French on the networks this evening. I say those 30 seconds are equally false in English and in French!

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HEALTH

PRESENCE OF FREON IN PAM—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of National Health and Welfare my question is directed to the Minister of Labour and it concerns the news that over the past four months, three young people died after inhaling the fumes of the oil contained in the product Pam. The Department of National Health and Welfare has revealed that six more youths had died previously. Let me tell you their families are not very pleased with the Minister's reply.

Considering the fact that the Government is now aware of the problem, and in order to prevent the disaster we had when the Government reacted to the mussel affair, and before any more people die, could the Minister promise the House that he will ask the manufacturers to remove the freon from this