

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the issue of child care spaces within educational facilities has been a matter of discussion between the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec. I am sure the Hon. Member recognizes the very clear and independent position the current and former Governments of Quebec have taken over a long period of time with respect to provincial rights over education.

What I can say to her is that some of the speculation in the French press over the last few days with respect to the percentages Quebec would receive is just that, speculation. The federal Government has very clearly said in its discussions with Quebec that the province will receive the 50 per cent plus factor, but with respect to school based child care, while we can I think negotiate some of the areas, the Child Care Act is not intended to extend sharing to education and health jurisdictions. That falls within Established Programs Financing. I think when we look at it seriously that is where it should be.

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TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT—CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Prime Minister. He is the person in the Government who said that cultural industries are exempt from the trade deal.

In the U.S. administration Statement of Action, which I have here, the U.S. says that any use of this exemption "would be regrettable" and the U.S. would take action "discouraging the exercise of and reliance on this clause in the future".

How can the Government say that culture is exempt when this very clear threat to the use of that exemption exists?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the Statement of Administrative Action filed in connection with this legislation is a wish list, a sop to individual Congressmen and Senators to get their support for the Bill. That is the way the congressional system works.

We have provisions in the agreement that exclude cultural industries from the free trade agreement except for a clause that protects us in the event there is some action taken by the U.S. It does not foreclose the U.S. from protesting. It does not foreclose the U.S. from trying to export its own goods and services. It does not foreclose the U.S. from expressing wishes. However, we will determine whether or not its wishes are ever acceded to.

There is nothing in the agreement that gives them any right to enforce any particular position with respect to cultural

industries. They are fully defended under the agreement, and the hon. gentleman's lachrymose reading of a clause or wish from the Statement of Administrative Action does not change that, no matter how much he might want it to be changed. He is Chicken Little following Colonel Barney Sanders there.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, the Minister should know that the administrative Statement of Action is a precise statement of what the U.S. Government will do, not what it wishes to do—what it will do—with respect to this agreement.

[Translation]

CULTURAL INDUSTRIES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): I have a supplementary. Will this Government get in touch with the U.S. administration to protest this American attack on our cultural industries?

[English]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, when we look at the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement we have first to realize that both sides negotiated hard and got a good deal for their respective countries.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: However, in Canada we protected all of the industries we wished to protect, like the cultural industries and the supply-management system. It is a miracle that we have all of these achievements and reached our objectives as we did.

The hon. gentleman says this is what the U.S. will do. The U.S. is free to do what it wishes, to try to put forward its point of view, to make its arguments. However, when it comes to matters within our jurisdiction we will decide. They can express wishes, we will decide. The Opposition believes that a wish from the U.S. is something that someone must carry out, and probably they would if they were in our position. We believe a wish is to be considered, but we will decide the matters that come within our jurisdiction.

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CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

ALLEGED GANG RAPE

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, it is amazing that the Prime Minister will not answer why the Government has broken its commitment on culture. Maybe he will answer another question.

Some Hon. Members: Order!

Ms. Copps: All of us were disgusted to read the press reports in the last several days about the gang rape of a militia officer allegedly involving 15 Armed Forces personnel, including a corporal. We understand that the Associate Minister of National Defence has called for an internal investigation.