

Oral Questions

outside of P.E.I. and the Magdalen Islands? Can he explain why, in his clear plan of action, his own officials were trying to convince the Ontario Government to lift its own ban?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, again the Hon. Member puts together positions, allegations which are not factual and which I did not say.

● (1500)

On Friday I put forward a ban. On the weekend of Saturday and Sunday the operation centre was put together. The plan that I put forward in the House today was developed during those days and the subsequent days this week.

For the Hon. Member to say that the plan was in place on Friday, again, as she has done day after day, it is simply false, and she insists on it, and she knows it, and she persists in it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Epp (Provencher): What I am saying to her if in fact she checks the Ontario records, when she checks the Ontario records when the information went out on December 1 to the Ontario Health Ministry on that day, which is then the job of the Ontario Health Ministry to put that information forward into all health units, Ontario didn't do it, and it was my officials in the next days in Health Protection Branch who literally took those alerts and went into the Ontario units of health, because Ontario hadn't done it. For her to put those kinds of details forward and try and wrap them around in some kind of semblance of truth has gone too far.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ONTARIO BAN—MINISTER'S POSITION

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that when two people have died it is not the arena for applause.

I would like to ask the Minister to give us a very specific answer to a very specific question. Last Friday morning in the House he stated that within three minutes he had issued an all-out alert on all shellfish in Atlantic Canada. Subsequent to that, his own officials in his own Department were in touch with officials from the Ministry of Health in Ontario trying to tell them it was okay to lift a wider ban on mussels outside of the mussels in P.E.I. and the Magdalen Islands.

I would like to ask the Minister how he can claim in the House today that he had a very clear plan of action last Friday, when on the one hand he was issuing an all-out ban on all shellfish, and on the other hand his own officials were trying to tell Ontario to lift their ban?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has again stated the allegations as if they were fact.

Ms. Copps: They are fact.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): They are not fact.

Ms. Copps: They are absolute fact.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): They are not fact. What I said on the Friday was the ban. I did not say that there was a clear plan in place on Friday. For the Member to persist on that time after time is simply false, it's wrong, and it shouldn't be done in this House.

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TRADE

CANADA-U.S. FREE TRADE AGREEMENT—PROVINCIAL JURISDICTION

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. His Minister has risen in the House and stated that the federal Government can sign treaties without the consent of the provinces.

Why is it that every year that I have gone to the International Labour Organization, the Canadian Government, whether it was the previous Liberal or the present Conservative Government, has always taken the position that it cannot sign treaties on the environment, on human rights, on women workers, and on occupational health and safety, because these are the jurisdiction of the provinces?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, for just about 45 minutes I have been sitting here expecting the NDP or the Liberals to ask me a question about agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, it was either that, or the statement this morning by the Chairman of General Motors in Oshawa saying that the Free Trade Agreement is a great deal for Oshawa, a great deal for Ontario and the automotive industry.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: What do I get? The NDP wants a legal opinion.

The Leader of the NDP has just heard from the distinguished Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada one of the finest legal opinions that this House will hear in a long time.

ILO COVENANTS—LEGAL POSITION OF GOVERNMENT

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): The Minister should be nervous after that endorsement by the Prime Minister considering past history.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: The Prime Minister is always right.