

The option available at that time was GATT. GATT, as we all know, is not binding. GATT has very powerful moral suasion but it is not binding. Today we have GATT, and as a matter of fact we are pursuing this particular case under GATT. We expect a resolution from them in June or as late as July.

We are pursuing GATT but we are also pursuing our rights under the free trade agreement which gives us what we did not have in 1971 and what we did not have until 1989: the binational panel, the dispute settlement mechanism. That is why we do not have to resort to spending millions of taxpayers' dollars on the proposal the hon. member suggests.

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#### TRADE

**Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

Under the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement both countries must provide an equal exchange of information for government contract tendering and bidding.

According to External Affairs officials, Canada has provided statistics to the United States but the United States has not responded, despite three years of requesting this information.

Will the minister defend Canadian businesses and ensure that this part of the agreement is fulfilled, or will he suspend the supply of this information until the U.S. begins to provide the necessary statistics?

**Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)):** Mr. Speaker, the government is aware of this request for information. The Americans indicate that they are going to supply us with that information. Of course if they do not, that would be a very serious violation of the understandings we have with them under the free trade agreement in terms of bilateral trade outside the free trade agreement.

What the hon. member should know, however, is that we have negotiated through the free trade agreement access to American procurement we never had before. We have information now from American government authorities on contract opportunities we never had before. We have that information. We would be very

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happy to supplement it with the information the hon. member suggested as well.

**Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear the minister making some sort of commitment to take action. I would like to bring to his attention that in fact the agreement states the two governments must exchange information on an annual basis to allow monitoring of contracts. Without this information, how can the government know if Canadian businesses are getting a fair shake in the U.S. market?

**Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)):** The hon. member makes a constructive point. We will make sure that we have all possible sources of information, including the information that he suggests.

Our information right now on the American market is very deep and very comprehensive but we will be glad to pursue our rights under the agreement with the Americans as raised by my hon. friend.

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#### ATLANTIC SALMON FISHERY

**Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Last week, the minister and his colleague in Newfoundland made a very difficult and important decision for conservation of Atlantic salmon, one that followed a ban on fishing in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia some years ago.

Accompanying the decision last week was an offer to the fishermen to repurchase their licences for retirement. I think that was a sound and compassionate offer and an investment in future conservation.

I would like to ask if that offer is also going to be made available for those New Brunswick and Nova Scotia fishermen who still retain commercial licences?

**Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency):** Mr. Speaker, I believe last week we made an important step forward with reference to the conservation of the Atlantic salmon, one of the finest and noblest fish that it is possible to come across, or to catch or to consume for that matter.