

[*English*]

TRADE

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister for International Trade, I will pose my question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

The final report of the trade panel on Canadian lobster exports to the U.S. has confirmed what fishermen and industry feared: Canada lost again. The Mitchell bill raising the minimum size of live lobster Canada can export to the U.S., a bill which the Minister for International Trade himself has said was a trade distorting measure, will be allowed to stand as a result of this ruling.

Will the minister not now admit that the dispute settlement mechanism of the FTA has once again failed Canada?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): No, of course not, Mr. Speaker. I would not admit that because it would be false; it would be wrong.

The matter that went before the panel was a matter which in Canada's view was a trade distorting mechanism. That was judged by the panel and, as in every case, one side is upheld and another is not upheld. Our view of that particular measure was not upheld.

As the hon. member knows, there is now a 90-day period within which it is possible for the parties to work out agreements dealing with areas that were raised by the panel decision. That process is being pursued.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question which is to the same minister concerns those 90-day negotiations.

Will the government be insisting that the Mitchell amendment is still a trade-distorting measure and must be withdrawn? Failing that, will the minister commit today that his government will make no more concessions to the U.S. on the backs of Atlantic lobster fishermen?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the government has not been making concessions of the kind described by the hon. member.

The discussions that will proceed now, following the decision by the panel, will have to do with negotiations between the parties relative to matters that were identified in the panel report.

Questions that are settled by the panel will be settled. Questions that are left open for negotiation will be negotiated.

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MEECH LAKE ACCORD

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

In response to earlier questions by the Leader of the Opposition, I would like to pursue the topic further in that the Charest committee made all-party recommendations which were unanimous and were endorsed in this House. It is becoming clear, at least by the news accounts since we do not have any other information, that those recommendations do not seem to be a major part in the kinds of meetings the Prime Minister has recently held.

I would like to ask the Acting Prime Minister today which parts of the Charest report are being discussed. Which elements of the Charest report are seen as being most important to address? Could he tell us, for example, whether the issues concerning aboriginal people and the north are on the agenda? What can the Acting Prime Minister tell us about what has happened to the recommendations of the Charest report in these discussions?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think all members of the House would agree that the work done by the Charest committee was extremely valuable work, both in terms of the agreements reached and of its place in the process of discussion.

We are now in a situation in which the Prime Minister of Canada met over the weekend with heads of the other governments who were party to the signature of the Meech Lake Accord. We are looking for areas in which we can find enough agreement for the 11 first ministers