

*Oral Questions*

## GOVERNMENT POLICY

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, when does the Minister intend to tell the Prime Minister that, so he will not be making speeches outlining a direction for the Government which is obviously totally at variance with what the Secretary of State for External Affairs is putting forward? When is the Government going to get its act together? When will the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State and all the rest of them be able to talk with one voice, with some kind of unity and cohesion on their position?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, on the weekend, after indicating that the Liberal Party policy was to proceed sector by sector, the President of the Liberal Party of Canada said:

To say that we'd negotiate it sector by sector, I don't believe that is exactly what we have in mind.

That is the clarity which exists in the Liberal Party. I know the Member would want to have the Prime Minister's statements quoted in their entirety and in context. The Prime Minister said:

That's what the trade talks are all about—extending the benefits of the Auto Pact to all industries, to all parts of Canada, not by piecemeal action but by a comprehensive duty covering all of our trade with the United States.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, can I assume from the Minister's answer that the Government has indeed changed its position from trying to secure a comprehensive free trade agreement and is now trying to secure a series of sectoral managed trade agreements under a general umbrella?

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Axworthy:** If Members opposite do not know the difference, it is about time they learned. These are two very different things. It is very important in the pursuit of these negotiations that we are clear about what the Government is now trying to achieve.

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the Government has not changed its policy. The Liberal Party has not found a policy.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER TO UNITED STATES PRESIDENT

**Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. On June 3 the Minister said categorically "no" when asked if the Government of Canada would cancel free trade talks if the U.S. tariff on softwood lumber goes ahead. Was the Prime Minister reflecting government policy in his letter of June 2 to the U.S. President when he said:

—I feel greater confidence that what we have just experienced is an isolated event; otherwise I would fear for the future of the negotiations now underway.

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was stating government policy. I was stating government policy. We were saying the same thing. That is a phenomenon unknown in the Liberal Party.

## CONTENT OF LETTER

**Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Secretary of State for External Affairs could tell us what is government policy. Is it his categorical "no" that talks are not subject to a favourable decision on softwood lumber, or the Prime Minister's implied threat to the U.S. President that, if tariff actions continue, the Prime Minister, in his own words "fears for the future of the negotiations now underway"? The Secretary of State may not be confused, but Canadians certainly are.

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** There was no such implied threat.

● (1420)

## SOFTWOOD LUMBER EXPORTS

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the same Minister. According to a report in today's press Mr. Len Santos, senior U.S. Senate trade adviser to the U.S. Finance Committee, is contending that a promise was made by President Reagan to take action against Canadian softwood to ensure that the needs of the U.S. lumber industry were met, the implication being no matter what decision was reached by the ITC and the Department of Commerce in the United States, President Reagan had made a particular deal with U.S. Senators to take action after that against Canadian softwood producers.

Could the Minister tell us if the Government of Canada has looked into this report and tell us what the Government's reaction was if the report is accurate?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I have seen the report, and I must confess I do not know who Mr. Santos is, or with what authority he speaks. I do know two things. One is that the Quebec Accord made it very clear that the discretion of the American Government would not be applied against Canada to bring in protectionist measures. That is why this Government reacted with such strength and effectiveness when the Quebec Accord was breached on the shakes and shingles question.

The second thing I know is that it is very helpful to Canada that Commerce Secretary Baldrige, when he referred to the court-like atmosphere in which the softwood question is being decided, indicated that that would be decided by due process. In other words, it would be decided on its merits, not by politics.