

*Oral Questions*

President Clinton indicated to me yesterday and to the media that he fully expected that NAFTA would pass the American Congress.

**Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North):** Madam Speaker, I would be happy to answer the Prime Minister's questions on another occasion. Today of course we are asking the Prime Minister to explain to the Canadian people what the policy of Canada is.

The Prime Minister must be aware that in the NAFTA negotiations a year ago Canada proposed an investment chapter which would have made any infringement subject to binding resolution. In other words, Canada itself proposed trade sanctions, an idea which the Bush administration subsequently rejected.

Why has the government reversed its position on sanctions? Why did Canada promote the idea of sanctions last year only to state that they are unacceptable today?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** My hon. friend is of course inadvertently distorting the position of the government. That happens so infrequently with him that I will not ask him to withdraw.

I do not know why he is so concerned about the well-being of the United States in regard to this. It seems to be quite able to look after itself—

**Mr. Crawford:** More so.

**Mr. Mulroney:** My hon. friend says more so. Then he will be pleased to hear that Mickey Kantor, the United States trade representative, a few hours ago in Paris said that there was reason for optimism about resolving the sanctions dispute. "We are making progress", he told American reporters at a private luncheon. "We have narrowed our differences on this point".

The hon. member can stop worrying about the Americans, his friends. They are saying things are okay.

**Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North):** Madam Speaker, it is not a question of the Prime Minister answering for the United States. The question we are posing to the Prime Minister is: What is the Canadian position?

• (1420)

Basically the government's position has been that nothing in the side accords impinges or influences the

treaty itself. That is why the government railroaded NAFTA through the House of Commons. It pushed it through the House of Commons without adequate discussion by the Canadian people.

The government knows that only last month the United States said that NAFTA would be modified and interpreted by the environmental and labour side accords which are not yet negotiated.

Does the Prime Minister not recognize that this confirms that NAFTA itself will be changed by the negotiation of the two side accords? In those circumstances, why did he push NAFTA through the House of Commons?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Madam Speaker, I pushed NAFTA through the House of Commons because the House of Commons wanted to pass the legislation.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Mulroney:** I walked into the House one day and the House rose up at once and said: "We want to pass NAFTA". So we went ahead and passed NAFTA.

Yesterday President Clinton said on NAFTA: "I think we can pass it with a very concerted effort, if the Congress has some assurances on the environmental and labour issues". We are ready to provide assurances on the environmental and labour issues. We are not ready to provide assurances that could be construed as an impingement on the sovereignty of Canada. We will not surrender the sovereignty of Canada. This government never has and never will.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. It is increasingly obvious that Canada was short-changed in the free trade agreement with the United States. There is plenty of evidence. Last week, it was durum wheat. This week, it's steel. Now that we know that the Americans are manipulating the trade rules to a shocking degree and that the Mexicans will be even more opportunistic, why does the government not first negotiate the same rules for all three partners before adopting NAFTA?