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TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES NEGOTIATIONS—ROLE OF PROVINCES

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister for International Trade as well. Once again a Government Minister has made a speech on trade in the United States while we cannot get answers or information in the House. Once again that statement contradicts previous positions.

Does the unilateral assertion made by the Minister for International Trade yesterday that there is recognition by all provinces that there will be only one negotiator at the table not fly in the face of the commitment made by the Secretary of State that the negotiating process would be worked out with the provinces over the next three months, and does it not abrogate the fundamental principle of the Halifax agreement that the provinces would have full partnership in the negotiating process?

Hon. James Kelleher (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, not at all. Unfortunately, and I do not blame the Hon. Member for this, *The Globe and Mail* only quoted the last half of my sentence. First, I was asked whether or not the United States had made any representations to me about provincial involvement in the negotiations. I replied no, and went on to say that we have reached an agreement in Halifax at the First Ministers' Conference, I believe two weeks ago now, that the provinces would have full participation but there is a recognition by all of the provinces that there will only be one negotiator at the table and that will be the federal Government. There is no departure whatsoever from what we agreed on in Halifax.

● (1450)

CONSULTATION WITH PREMIERS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for giving us the full benefit of the entire statement. It still does not answer the question of whether or not this interpretation by the Minister is, in fact, agreed to by the provinces. Before the Minister gave the statement that it is recognized that there will be only one negotiator, did he take the trouble to consult with provincial Ministers to gain their approval for this type of statement or, in fact, did he once again ignore their interests and concerns?

Hon. James Kelleher (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I would again advise my hon. colleague that there has been no departure whatsoever. We agree and will fully participate with the provinces in these negotiations, as we have said. We have agreed that there will be a 90-day period within which to do this. I am pleased to advise the Hon. Member that I had lunch today with Mr. Reisman—

Oral Questions

Mr. Broadbent: That's nice!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kelleher: I am sorry the Hon. Member was not invited. I obviously forgot.

Mr. Axworthy: Maybe next time.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Who paid?

Mr. Kelleher: Since he was not at the lunch, I want him to know that Mr. Reisman has already sent out letters to the provinces inviting them to meet with him prior to Christmas to commence the 90-day participation period.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL AGREEMENT

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the same Minister. I do not have a copy of *The Globe and Mail* article. I have a copy of the Minister's speech—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Langdon:—in which he says that this agreement in no way diminishes the primacy of the federal Government in leading the negotiations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: More, more!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. McDermid: Read the whole thing!

Mr. Langdon: Where in the Halifax statement, which was agreed to by the provinces, is there any reflection of this type of primary role for the Government being laid out? Did the Minister not in fact mislead his audience in New York?

Hon. James Kelleher (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, not at all. I would like to read from the paragraph which precedes the paragraph read by the Hon. Member.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: More, more!

Mr. McDermid: We're going to get the whole thing out yet!

Mr. Kelleher: I can start right from the beginning, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Broadbent: Just table it.

Mr. Kelleher: It's a great speech, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: More, more!