

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP WEEK**

**Mr. Denis Pronovost (Saint-Maurice):** Mr. Speaker, we are celebrating National Citizenship Week for the fifth consecutive year to remind us that Canadian citizenship concerns us all. It is more than a mere formality to obtain the right to vote or a passport. Bearing that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I would call upon the Bloc Quebecois members in this House to stop working at destroying our country, Canada, and to start working with us at rebuilding this country, Canada, on a sounder basis to ensure a brighter future to all Quebecers within Canada.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[Translation]

**TRADE**

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, the United States have challenged the decision regarding Canadian pork rendered by the binational panel on Free Trade. In the speech he gave yesterday in New York City, the Minister for International Trade stated that, if the U.S. appeal goes through it will be very harmful to the Free Trade Agreement and the participation of Canada in negotiations with Mexico and the United States. So, I would like the Prime Minister to tell me if his minister was stating government policy when he said in New York that the Free Trade Agreement would be seriously affected?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the exact words of the minister were:

[English]

“In the event that this extraordinary challenge was successful, it would be very harmful to the United States-Canada Free Trade Agreement and to any support for that agreement in Canada”, Mr. Crosbie said: “Naturally, that will affect whether or not Canada enters into any other free trade agreements”.

[Translation]

That is the minister's position and that is also the government's position. We take very seriously the Americans' decision to invoke an extraordinary provision in a regular case. This provision was negotiated for a very

precise purpose, and the Canadian government does not agree at all with the decision of the American administration to invoke this extraordinary provision in this case. Such a decision dilutes the impact of an important decision-making process. We will watch and follow this very closely and vigorously.

[English]

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister for International Trade was not the only one to say that the free trade agreement will be called into question if the American appeal goes through. A week ago Simon Reisman, the chief negotiator of the free trade agreement said, and I quote: “If there is some way to undermine and attack (the binational panel), then I would say we have to have a fresh look at the whole agreement. That is how important it is”.

• (1420)

Given that both the minister and the chief negotiator say that the trade agreement is open to abuse, will the Prime Minister admit that this deal is flawed and do something to correct these flaws rapidly?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I know where the previous leader of the Liberal Party stood with regard to the free trade agreement. We are still waiting to hear whether the new Leader is in favour of or against the free trade agreement. We still have not heard.

The dispute settlement mechanism is an important part of the free trade agreement. Indeed, I think it is probably fair to say that the Government of Canada certainly would not have entered into a free trade agreement if there were not an impartial way to resolve disputes.

Among the negotiated provisions was this reference to an extraordinary provision. It was clear that this extraordinary provision was to be invoked only in the most exceptional circumstances by either of the parties. Fraud on the part of one of the judges is one of the kinds of exceptional circumstance.

We believe that the utilization of this particular clause in regard to the favourable decision to Canada on pork was an abuse of the process. Canada had won that case fair and square. This was an abuse of the process by the Americans, and that is the message I conveyed to the President of the United States. It is the message the