

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition would do well to allow the critic for international trade to ask questions on international trade. Our friend is really out of touch both with reality and with all of the facts in contrast to the official critic, the hon. member from Toronto, who on matters of international trade is always well informed. His questions are direct.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the right hon. Prime Minister would like to move to the answer to the question.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the member for Etobicoke—North for any damage I have done to his career. It was indeed inadvertent and I withdraw those comments. I should say in fairness that he is as inaccurate and ineffective—

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps we should move on. The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, far be it from me to interrupt a lover's quarrel when they both support NAFTA and the free trade agreement.

I would like to ask this very simple question. Over the past two years, I have asked the minister to provide to this Chamber and the Canadian public detailed information about the negotiations of the North American free trade agreement. Specifically, I asked for the sector-by-sector studies that should be made and, I assume, were made by this government going into the negotiations. I was told that they would not be made available because it would expose our negotiating hand.

The deal is now initialled. Will the minister now table in this House the sector-by-sector studies that surely must have been done before this trade deal was initialled by this government?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I know it is very hard for the hon. member to talk accurately about the NAFTA because he has never come to briefings that have been offered to him on half a dozen occasions. We quite understand the difficulty he has in understanding the issue.

My hon. friend I am sure is well aware there are NAFTA hearings starting tomorrow. I will be very happy

to respond to any specific questions he has on elements of the agreement.

He is also aware that the Department of Finance released a document last week which sets out in very clear terms drawing on work done within the department as well as on work done by respected organizations outside of the government which support the government's position that the NAFTA is a very positive policy initiative supportive of the economy of Canada. I expect that the hon. member will read that agreement and come to the same conclusion.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, it is true that I did not go to the secret briefings because as a member of Parliament I would never sign the Official Secrets Act to find out information that should be made public to every Canadian.

My question is very clear and very precise. If there are any studies at all sector by sector, will the government release them? Not tomorrow, not next week, but will the minister admit in this House now that no sector-by-sector studies were ever done at all by this government? That is why they are not being released.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member has just inadvertently left a very misleading statement on the record which I want to correct for him now.

He referred to all of the meetings being secret when he knows full well that there was a request for the first meeting for such an undertaking on behalf of members who participated. After that there were no requests. That was made known to the hon. member many times, yet he continues to leave this misleading statement on the—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Abitibi.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MINING

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Is the Government of Canada prepared to sign a mineral development agreement with the Govern-