

Oral Questions

The Minister of Transport's belittling comments about the women of Canada are as insulting as Ambassador Simon Reisman's remarks last month that some of those who oppose free trade can be compared to Nazis. Regrettably, the Prime Minister refused to demand an apology from Ambassador Reisman last month. Today I wish to ask the Prime Minister, on behalf of the women of Canada, whether or not he will demand an apology from the Minister of Transport?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there have been no insulting comments made in connection with the women of Canada by myself, so the premise of the Hon. Member's question is entirely wrong.

I did have some comments to make on some things said by several women here in Canada, one of them the Hon. Member for Hamilton East who made the extraordinary statement that the opening of Canada's service industry to the Americans could allow them to expand their growing surrogate mother industry into Canada in search of babies for export.

Some Hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Crosbie: I satirized this attempt by the Hon. Member to arouse needless fears because, of course, the free trade agreement has nothing to do with, and certainly will not permit the surrogate mother industry to establish itself, by force or whatever, in Canada. In responding to that, I certainly was satiric.

I also answered several other inaccurate statements made by that Hon. Member, including the statement she made last week in Vancouver that the agreement would have a five-year termination clause; she was positively sure of it.

Ms. Copps: I didn't say that all.

Mr. Crosbie: It turned out it has a six-month termination clause. That is how accurate the Hon. Member's Party has been in this free trade debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTER'S HUMOUR—REQUEST FOR APOLOGY

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, banner headlines in *The Sunday Express* in St. John's suggest that some people were insulted.

The Minister's comments that he "doesn't give a damn" what the member for the National Action Committee on the Status of Women in St. John's thinks, or Sister Lorraine Michael of the Catholic Social Action Committee, bespeak of more than just responding to the Hon. Member for Hamilton East.

What is in question here is not the Minister's use of humour, which is well known in this House. What is in question is the Minister's brand of humour.

I ask the Prime Minister whether or not he thinks it is acceptable for the Minister of Transport, speaking on behalf of

the Government of Canada in selling free trade, to use a brand of humour that essentially says, "Now we have consulted the boys, it doesn't matter a whit what the women of Canada think. We can proceed unanimously without consulting the women of this country".

Given those types of comments, and I ask the Prime Minister to check the record, will he seek an apology from the Hon. Member for St. John's West? This is not a laughing matter.

• (1500)

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the actual headline of the story from which the hon. gentleman gets his question—he lacks imagination to research his own—says: "Crosbie's 'scandalous' remarks have several women up in arms". Who are the women who are up in arms?

The Hon. Member for Hamilton East whom I trimmed in a debate in Vancouver last week, and several other NDP representatives—

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, this is not funny.

Mr. Crosbie:—one of whom appeared before the House of Commons committee representing the Coalition of Citizens Against Pornography and said that free trade would make it more difficult to enact and enforce Canadian anti-porn legislation. These are the people who are protesting, the people who make these silly, jejune, and false statements.

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HEALTH

SHELLFISH PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. It has to do with the mussel mix-up of last week. Prior to last Friday the Minister, on the question of the mussels, was as communicative as an oyster. Last Friday it was as if the magpies had taken over in his Department and, as a result, considerable confusion has been created in the shellfish industry in the country, resulting in some threats to the producers and the distributors of shellfish in Atlantic Canada.

What steps will the Minister or his Government take to restore the confidence of consumers in the shellfish industry?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to answer the question of the Hon. Member. As he possibly knows, an operations centre was established which is headed through the Department of Health and Welfare. The 1-800 number was put into place. Additionally, all product is being taken off the market. We hope that that will be completed by today. Procedures are being put into place so that new products coming on to the market are totally within the keeping of health and quality requirements. That is