

Oral Questions

[Translation]

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT, 1987

QUEBEC AS DISTINCT SOCIETY—POSITION OF LIBERAL PARTY

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, Canada as a country is unique because of its bilingualism and its multiculturalism. Canadians take great pride in the fact that this tremendous diversity does not prevent them from seeing themselves, first of all and above all, as profoundly Canadian.

However, refusing to admit that Quebec constitutes a distinct society, different from the rest of Canada, shows a complete lack of historical knowledge and a lack of respect for the Francophone population of Quebec. Unfortunately, that is what seems to be happening today the Liberal Caucus, where, according to one Caucus member, some fellow members are anti-Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed in the narrow-minded attitude of those members of the Liberal Caucus who refuse to recognize the fact that Quebec is a distinct society. I am sad to hear that anti-Quebec forces are at work in the Liberal Party and in the Liberal Caucus in this House, forces that are casting doubts on the specific character of Quebec society.

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THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF PATRO D'OTTAWA

TRIBUTE TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, Ottawa's Patro, one of Lowertown's most important Franco-phone institutions, will be celebrating its thirtieth anniversary tomorrow. As one of seven centres of this kind that exist in Eastern Canada, the Patro has, over the years, opened its doors to many children, teenagers and senior citizens, providing them with a place to play, to talk to friends or to go swimming. Throughout its history the Patro has made an admirable contribution to community development and it continues to do so today. Several times its very survival was in jeopardy. However, with the help of the people in the community, the leaders of Patro managed to meet the challenges facing them.

Thanks to the hard work and perseverance of members who have had to cope with all kinds of financial and other problems, tomorrow Patro will be celebrating its thirtieth anniversary. Those who take part in this great celebration will remember happy times spent in the pool, at fairs, festivals, day camps and summer camps, and the plays and many other activities that have been a source of entertainment for Ottawa's Lowertown, in my riding.

Today I wish to pay tribute to all those who, with Father David Lachance, the founder of the Saint-Vincent-Patro in Ottawa, have made this institution prosper. To all those who worked so hard, sincere thanks!

[English]

TRADE

SUPPORT FOR CANADA-UNITED STATES NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. Jim Caldwell (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, the news that the bilateral trade negotiations may be back on the rails is good news for Canadians. It is time those who have opposed this historic negotiation got onside. The time for political rhetoric is over.

For the sake of Canada and the future of our young people and the new jobs a new deal would bring, opposition Members should stop trying to undermine the negotiations. Those opposite would have had us pull out months ago and subject us to further protectionist policies by our neighbour to the south. They have no solution to the problem, only selfish political posturing.

In the final hours it is time to end the scare tactics which have made some Canadians uneasy over the last several months, despite assurances from the Government that our social programs, the Auto Pact, agricultural marketing boards, and our cultural industries are not and have not been part of the bilateral negotiations. Those opposed have used these tactics to make cheap political gains.

As the talks enter the final stage let us pull together, and not give the U.S. the advantage of being divided. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) has repeated from the beginning that if it is not in the interest of Canada there will be no deal. That is good enough for me and I am sure it is good enough for all Canadians.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

TRADE

FREE TRADE WITH UNITED STATES—REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT ADHERE TO CONDITIONS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister. During the discussions on free trade held during the past week, in this House, two crucial points for Canada have been raised. First, Canada's need for a binding and universal dispute settlement mechanism, a mechanism which would allow Canada to be exempted from American trade duties. And, second, protection for the Canadian cultural industry and Canada's right to grant regional industrial development subsidies. Will the Deputy Prime Minister assure us today that those requirements will not be set aside during the current negotiations in Washington?

The Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there has been no basic change in the Canadian position, and we do not intend changing it.