

Oral Questions

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, the minister says he has been considering this issue. This government was first informed of this problem four years ago. Furthermore, in the government's industry study signed by this minister it was admitted that the free trade agreement has caused problems for Canadian printers.

So I put it to the minister: just how much longer are Canadian printers going to have to be beaten up by the Americans before this government acts?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): As I said, Mr. Speaker, I propose to raise that with my colleague, the Minister of National Revenue, who, as he knows, is out of the House today on government business.

In answer to his question, my first answer still stands.

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NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, with the United States clearly controlling the timetable of the trade negotiations with Mexico and Canada, the ratification this year of an agreement now seems increasingly unlikely.

Is the government prepared to leave the negotiations in limbo until the issue is decided by some future U.S. administration? Or given the work already completed, would the government participate in a separate Canadian-Mexican deal as a senior Canadian trade official said last May?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, our objective and the objective of all three countries is to proceed quickly with negotiations.

We are going to be having a meeting of the trade ministers from the three countries next Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. At that time, we will be reviewing the status of the main outstanding issues. This will not be the final meeting of the negotiations by any means. That will give us an up-to-date status of the negotiations. At that stage, we hope to give direction to the negotiators.

The timing of this as it relates to the disposition of the U.S. Congress to deal with the matter is still very much

up in the air as my hon. friend probably saw in *The Globe and Mail* article this morning. It is something that we are following very closely.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, the question of timing raises a further question, as the minister knows full well, of what happens if the trilateral negotiation remains in limbo.

Last year the Mexican Ambassador to Canada raised the possibility of a separate Mexican-Canadian agreement in the event that the trilateral deal is stalled in Washington. A Canadian trade official endorsed that proposal and noted that in Canada it would be received with interest.

Is the minister saying today that he regards that as an option if the trilateral agreement becomes caught up in the U.S. presidential election?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the U.S. presidential election is in early November. The conclusion of the fast-track authority that the U.S. Congress is operating under is February 28, 1993. So my hon. friend has asked a somewhat hypothetical question. I just draw to his attention that there are a few months within that period where the matter could be dealt with if there is an initial agreement.

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FISHERIES

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, it does very little to help the fishermen who are going out beyond the 200-mile limit to try to impress upon the world the ecological disaster that results from this foreign overfishing. The Liberals blame the Tories and vice versa. The Liberals know about the Economic Council of Canada report in 1980 and the Kirby report in 1982 with which they did the same as the Tories have done, nothing.

The question is where do we go from here? Has the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans considered going to the North Atlantic Fisheries Organization meeting and proposing some measures that would strengthen that organization and give it the teeth that it needs to police its own members?