

Oral Questions

Has the minister been able to obtain better access for the textile and clothing sectors?

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend is aware of the status of the negotiations. We are not satisfied nor is the clothing sector satisfied with the current state of the negotiations. That is why we continue to press for greater access than has been offered at this point.

We will continue to do that, working closely in consultation with both the clothing and the textile sectors in order to ensure that there is balance also between these two segments of industry which are so closely interrelated.

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, the minister says he is not satisfied with the current state of negotiations. He knows that the mistakes that he made in the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement are coming back to haunt him today.

I would ask the minister to state categorically that he will not sign a North American free trade agreement which would mean a further restriction of Canada's ability to export clothing to the United States.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend refers to the FTA. I think that there are some segments in the clothing sector that have made considerable strides in developing the improved access that they have from the FTA into increased business. There are a number of companies in his region that would qualify for that description.

We will continue to improve as best we can the access that is there, as I said working closely with the industry as well as with the textile sector, which is also an important industry in his province and in that way try to get the best possible deal that we can for those two industries.

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• (1450)

NCC GREENBELT

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Public Works. The greenbelt

lands here in the nation's capital were created in the 1960s by the federal government to protect environmentally sensitive lands, to limit urban sprawl, and to enhance the nation's capital. Recent actions by the National Capital Commission have Nepean and other area municipalities concerned that there is movement away from the original objectives for these lands.

Does this government plan on maintaining the *status quo* on all greenbelt lands or are these lands in fact up for sale piece by piece?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to inform the member for Nepean, whose interest I greatly appreciate in these matters, that the NCC as she probably knows is conducting a major review on the greenbelt to re-examine and redefine the use of the lands, and to ensure these lands continue to enhance the quality of life of the national capital into the next century.

Any changes that will be made on a case by case basis will be looked at closely and all levels of government and affected residents will be consulted. I can assure her there is no drastic change contemplated. We continue to exercise the most careful stewardship over these lands.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, to the same minister. I have here a letter which clearly reflects the wishes of the majority of the people in this region and it states: "We do not want the greenbelt lands severed and sold for residential and commercial development". Can the minister give a clear undertaking to this House here today that this will not happen in the national capital region?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I can certainly identify with those sentiments. I want to assure my colleague again that any such steps affecting these lands will be taken after close examination on a case by case basis, after close consultation with all levels of government, and with adjacent owners.

I see no likelihood of any of these lands being severed and sold for residential purposes except in perhaps very exceptional circumstances. I certainly do not endorse such a policy.