

Oral Questions

the United States in one sector of the economy—choose whichever one you will—while at the same time sitting by and allowing the U.S. to impose restriction in an area which will be vitally important to tens of thousands of Canadians' jobs both now and in the future? Is the Government simply going to sit idly by, as is now the case, and allow the U.S. to move almost inextricably toward the imposition of restrictions on basic steel, while at the same time continuing discussions on the freeing of trade in other areas?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, Hon. Members—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: Ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Regan: The truest words that I have heard in here—

Mr. Mulroney: John is impressed.

Mr. Regan:—in a long while were when the Hon. Member said that one of us does not understand the situation, and it is he, I can assure you without any question of doubt, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: You are Okay, Gerry.

Mr. Regan: Let us consider what the Hon. Member is saying. He is saying that if there is some advantage to Canada and to Canadian workers in achieving a sectoral free trade in one product, even if that is going to protect Canadian products and jobs, let us not talk to the Americans about that possibility if they are taking protective action in relation to any other product. If that is not NDP confused thinking, then I have never heard it. I am saying steel, carbon steel, is one of the subjects where we are discussing the possibility of free trade with the Americans right now because we saw, while the Member was still daydreaming, the threat that exists in the protective action that has resulted in the fact that the American steel industry is only operating at 50 per cent. We are trying to combat that in the same way that we combated the threat to lumber, while the NDP continues to daydream.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I want to say that volume and verbosity will not take the place of brain.

Mr. Pinard: Louder.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, let me ask the Minister for the last time is it the intention of the Government to continue negotiations in areas other than basic steel, which are presently going on, and he knows it, to establish a free trade agreement with the United States in computerization and in other similar fields, and at the same time allow the U.S. Government to impose restrictions which will cost tens of thousands of Canadian jobs?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, with due respect to the Hon. Member, I suggest to him that I am in a better position to decide how we can best protect those jobs in negotiations with the Americans than the Hon. Member, who has shown no previous interest in the subject.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deans: Come on, Gerry.

Mr. Regan: The question of what negotiations we will carry on in negotiations with other sectors will depend upon the interest of Canadian workers in those other sectors. At the same time we will continue to give the strenuous protection to the steel workers in this country that we gave to those who worked in the lumber industry.

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CROWN CORPORATIONS

DE HAVILLAND—SALE OF AIRCRAFT TO CANADIAN COMPANIES

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, there is a great deal of concern in parts of the country over the possible lost sale of \$100 million worth of aircraft from de Havilland to air companies here in Canada. My question is for the Minister of Finance in light of his statement in the House that the federal Government cannot give subsidies to Canadian companies wishing to buy aircraft from de Havilland. Would the Minister of Finance explain to the House how he justifies the financial assistance package to de Havilland of \$20 million to sell aircraft to Indonesia, while we lose jobs at de Havilland, and while 10,000 other jobs are in jeopardy in the industrial sectors of the nation?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member looks at the support the Government gives to de Havilland, he will see that, contrary to the negativist attitude of the Conservatives, the Government has been very strongly behind the aviation industry. I remember when the Opposition was attacking us for giving aid and support to Canadair, and when the Opposition was attacking us for giving aid and support to de Havilland. We have been committing support by investing hundreds of millions of dollars, as a matter of fact, in equity in these corporations. In addition, we are encouraging them to make use of all the various government programs that are available to industry generally in order to expand exports of Canadian goods abroad and also to meet competition. The more support we give to de Havilland generally is going to show in the total price at which it will be able to sell its product, whether in Canada or abroad.

The Hon. Member knows, however, that under the Export Development Corporation there is a program available to all corporations in Canada in order to favour exports and allow us to meet competition abroad. De Havilland is in the same situation in that regard.