

Affairs regarding the free trade issue. The Minister of Development in the Province of Nova Scotia stated:

We want negotiated immunity from U.S. trade law for resource industries and other sectors benefiting from regional development and other government support programs.

Would the Secretary of State for External Affairs inform the House whether or not the Government of Canada is in agreement with the position being advocated by the Province of Nova Scotia, and if he is in agreement, has he communicated that agreement in writing to the Government of Nova Scotia?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as I think the House knows, there will be a meeting later today involving the First Ministers of the provinces with the Prime Minister of Canada to discuss the quite substantial progress that has been made in federal-provincial co-operation on trade matters and to carry that co-operation forward. It may well be that the Government of Nova Scotia will raise that question during those discussions.

● (1440)

FEDERAL POSITION

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, that answer is totally unacceptable. By virtue of its incompetence and flip-flopping on the free trade issue the Government is jeopardizing the very, very fundamental principle of national unity in our country. Where does the Government of Canada stand with regard to the request being made by the Province of Nova Scotia? Is it for it or against it?

Mr. Berger: Yes or no?

Mr. Nystrom: Both.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): The request was made by the Government of Nova Scotia. The answer will be given to the Government of Nova Scotia. As someone who saw this country very nearly torn apart during the long constitutional debates by that Member and the Party with which he is associated, I am not going to accept lectures from him as to aspects of national unity. That Party nearly destroyed this country. This Government is bringing it back together.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rossi: Your own Members gave you a good lesson a few years ago.

Oral Questions

AIR CANADA

SUSPENSION OF FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, fair-minded Canadians realize that Toni Corrado, the flight attendant suspended for answering questions concerning politics from one or more of a group of Tory delegates, has received special treatment by way of a 30-day suspension for not breaking any known rules.

I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Transport. Is it true that the original letter of complaint beginning "Dear Don", was from a member of the executive and secretary of the Conservative constituency association of Williams Lake and was written on Conservative Party stationery? Will he show us the original of the letter of complaint?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I first want to take issue with a couple of statements that have been made in the House with the implication that I had personally instructed Air Canada to take this kind of action.

Mr. Benjamin: Nobody said that.

Mr. Mazankowski: Well, it has been referred to time and time again. I categorically deny that.

Mr. Rodriguez: Nobody said that.

Mr. Mazankowski: If the Member has any proof to substantiate that, I wish he would present it.

Mr. Benjamin: Nobody said it.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I have before me the letter which was received, along with the instructions. For the benefit of all Hon. Members I would be prepared to table it so that Hon. Members can see precisely what actually took place.

Mr. Benjamin: Is that the original?

Mr. Mazankowski: They are photocopies. I will check to see if there is an original around. I will find out. I usually stick to my word.

Mr. Broadbent: Right, right.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Mazankowski: This is not a matter of freedom of speech.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please! The Minister is being a little long.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure you that no one in this House that I am aware of ever said that the Minister politically interfered. Certainly I did not.