

Oral Questions

regional growth, and to new jobs created here in Canada, which we need. Notwithstanding a job-creation record where more jobs were created in Canada than all of western Europe combined, we must do more.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

DURATION OF DRUG PATENTS

Hon. Douglas C. Frith (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Twenty-four hours after the U.S. Trade Commission hammered the Canadian softwood industry, what sense does it make for the Government to put forward legislation today to increase the patent life for the multinational American drug companies? How are we enhancing our Canadian trade bargaining position by this kind of a—

Mr. Speaker: Order, order, order, please. The Chair is in a difficulty because the same problem is now raised here where questions are being asked about legislation that is not yet before the House. Either it is anticipation or it is hypothetical. Order, please.

I think the Member can ask a question on policy matters without reference to the specific Bill.

Mr. Frith: Mr. Speaker, twenty-four hours after the U.S. Trade Commission has hammered the Canadian softwood industry, does the Prime Minister consider it wise that his Government would table legislation in this House that is going to increase patent life for the American multinational drug companies, and how is that move going to improve our bargaining position by this type of giveaway?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the last lesson that anyone needs on anything in terms of skill is from the Liberal Party, and from this particular Member. We saw, when the Leader of the Opposition was Minister of Finance, spending rose 23 per cent a year, the debt grew by 50 per cent, and debt service grew by 85 per cent. It was a result of those skills that he brought to bear that the country almost went belly up. That is the problem with the little Liberal attitude. Ours is progressive. We believe in international trade, competitiveness, increased productivity, and 600,000 new jobs already in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Hon. Douglas C. Frith (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, we will not take any lessons from a Prime Minister who gave away FIRA, and the National Energy Program.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Frith: How can the Prime Minister defend this legislation when his own report on intellectual property rights states

that stronger intellectual property protection will not necessarily result in changes in trade patterns between Canada and the U.S., but will accomplish the goal of stronger international protection benefiting the American nationals financially?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in the McMillan Binch newsletter it said that the National Energy Program is a legislative nightmare laced with ministerial and bureaucratic discretion. Then it said we cannot afford the outflows associated with more FIRA-induced Canadianization. The Leader of the Opposition was applauding our position.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The idea today is to get as many Members recognized as possible.

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STATUS OF WOMEN

FUNDING OF WOMEN'S PROGRAMS

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I have an important question to direct to the Secretary of State. Yesterday representatives of many women's groups reminded the Minister of Canada's commitment to UN conventions to eliminate discrimination against women, to the Nairobi forward looking strategies, to improve the status of women, and also to equality under our own Canadian Charter. In view of these commitments that Canada has made, will the Minister reconsider the new 5 per cent cut to Secretary of State women's programs which is, in fact, a 16 per cent cut from 1983 commitments?

● (1130)

[Translation]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I may remind the Hon. Member that in 1983, funding for the program to promote the status of women was around \$5 million, and that this year, the Government will be allocating \$12,453,000 to defend the status of women in Canada.

[English]

VOLUNTARY WORK DONE BY WOMEN

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, the Minister has not answered the concerns that were expressed yesterday. Does he not realize how little women's groups get now, how much voluntary labour they put into their efforts, as well as the uncertainty involved? Will he end their uncertainty and restore full funding for women's programs?

[Translation]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, last night I met 60 representatives from various