

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

Mr. Langdon: Since I was the person involved, Harvey, it might be—

Mr. Andre: All you can say is that you did not receive it. You cannot say it was not sent.

Mr. Langdon: I happen to know that the invitation was not sent to myself, nor was it sent to the chairman of our caucus. It was sent to the Leader of our Party—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Langdon: —and was not passed on until the conference had begun. I would ask the Minister to simply accept that.

Mr. McDermid: You have problems in your caucus. I understand.

Mr. Langdon: No, as the Minister knows, I was at the last GATT conference which I do not think the Minister attended, and I have very considerable interest in what takes place in that organization and in this round of trade negotiations which we supported, with some exceptions including agriculture.

Mr. McDermid: Madam Chairman, I feel very badly that the Leader of the NDP did not pass on the invitation to his trade critic. However, he knew the GATT meetings were on. He might have inquired as to whether or not he was welcome.

Mr. Crosbie: He would have been welcomed with open arms.

Mr. McDermid: With open arms. We were all looking for him down there. I wanted to take him to dinner in Montreal, for heaven's sake, but he did not show up.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Order, please.

Mr. Flis: Point of order, Madam Chairman. The constituents of Parkdale—High Park sent me here to debate the trade Bill, not whether or not someone got an invitation.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The Hon. Member for Winnipeg South.

Ms. Dobbie: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Point of order, Madam Chairman. I realize this is a wide open debate, but we have just had the Minister make a comment and you then recognized the Hon. Member for

Winnipeg South. Would it not be appropriate that someone from the opposition side be recognized rather than having the Minister followed by a Member on the government side? I submit it would be proper to recognize now a Member from the opposition side.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The Hon. Member has suggested that the way the chairman of this committee is recognizing Members is not correct. The way I saw the exchange was that the Hon. Minister simply answered a question put forward by the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor. I agree that we went into quite a long exchange that was not exactly addressing the Bill or answering the question. However, I think it would be quite correct now for someone from the government side to express his or her view, and then someone from the opposition side can have the floor, which is the normal understanding.

I recognize again the Hon. Member for Winnipeg South.

Ms. Dobbie: Madam Chairman, thank you again. I am very proud—

Mr. Langdon: Point of order. A question was asked and I do not recall the Minister dealing with it.

Mr. McDermid: What, on amendments?

Mr. Langdon: Yes.

Mr. McDermid: Yes, I did.

Mr. Langdon: I did not hear it.

Mr. McDermid: You were not listening.

Mr. Nunziata: Point of order, Madam Chairman. I have been listening to the proceedings this morning and noted that members of the Opposition have been asking questions of the Minister and he not only tried to answer the question but went off on a discussion of his own.

I simply seek some direction from the Chair with respect to what is permitted when questions are put to him. I would simply request that the Chair restrict the Minister's comments to answering the questions put by the Opposition rather than editorializing on every point we make.

Mr. Crosbie: Why don't you do up the speeches for us from now on? This is a new rule. No freedom of speech in committee.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: I am sure the Hon. Minister will attempt to be as brief as possible in