

Oral Questions

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Solicitor General who very conveniently did not answer a question from my leader a few moments ago.

CSIS has agents in London. The attack in London took place at approximately 8 a.m. Ottawa time. The attack in Ottawa did not take place until around noon. That is four hours. It does not take four hours to make a trans-Atlantic phone call.

I want to know where our CSIS agent or agents were in London that morning and why they were asleep at the switch and did not get in touch with Ottawa in time.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I never answer a question without having the facts at my fingertips. That is an obvious question and it is a question that I have asked. I have asked it of my officials and I have asked to be provided with a full report as to what the chronology is.

I reject absolutely and categorically any suggestion that our people in London or anywhere else were asleep at the switch.

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, if the minister does not have his report ready, how can he reject anything at this time? How can he say they were not asleep at the switch when he admits he does not know the facts?

My supplementary question is simply this: Why is it that the government has not entered into a new regime of protocols, particularly with those sensitive embassies located in Ottawa where a normal person or a reasonable person might from time to time anticipate or expect acts of violence or vandalism or even worse, considering the hot spots in the world, namely Iraq and Iran, particularly the IRA, the Red Army brigades in Europe and so on?

Surely it is time that the government through the RCM Police entered into new protocols with our foreign visitors here in Ottawa and the diplomatic corps.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I always reject allegations that are not based on fact and I never discuss sensitive security arrangements on the floor of the House.

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister about the discussions now under way in Montreal on the proposed North American free trade agreement.

Gary Hufbauer and Jeffrey Schott of the Institute of International Economics in Washington have just completed and released a study. In it they find that such an agreement between now and 1995 would create a net gain of 600,000 jobs in Mexico, 130,000 jobs in the United States, but a net loss of 4,000 jobs in Canada.

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister: Why is his government pursuing discussions for such a one-sided and harmful deal when it comes to the interests of our Canadian workers?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I do not know about the study to which the hon. member refers, but his question shows an unbelievable short-sightedness in its premise.

First of all, the hon. member should know that Mexican tariffs against Canada are quite substantial, much more substantial across a wider range of goods than are tariffs right now against Mexico which are virtually, pretty well all gone. Therefore there is a great incentive for us to negotiate a new agreement with Mexico and the United States in the NAFTA context.

Our objectives in this negotiation are clear. Let me repeat them. We want to improve our access to the Mexican market. We want to give greater access to North American inputs to permit Canadians to compete better in the world markets. We also, by the way, want to be a preferred site for investment in North America. If there is going to be investment in North America, we want it to include Canada. There are other objectives, all of which make a NAFTA negotiation pose an important challenge for Canada and we think a very good opportunity as well.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister who forgets that the current free trade deal with the United States has certainly not made Canada a preferred site for