

Oral Questions

Mr. Regan: Last year we had an \$18 billion trade surplus, Mr. Speaker. At this stage in a recovery usually you get a flattening out in the amount of the trade surplus because, as the economy recovers, people tend to buy more imported goods. That is particularly true when you consider how soft the European currencies are against ours and the difficulty of selling into Europe because of the currency situation.

You mention the question of the Canadian dollar *vis-à-vis* the American dollar. Compare the disadvantage that we have because European currencies have gone down some 40 per cent against ours in the last four years, and consider the fact that the less developed countries have no credit worthiness to buy much in the way of imports these days.

Mr. Crosbie: Move over, Turner.

Mr. Regan: Yet we build an \$18 billion surplus. Our trade figures—our exports—are at an all-time high. I want the Hon. Member to know that I have got that Department just a-hummin', and I am proud of what it sells.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen: Well, by George, Sir, if that Department is just a-hummin' it's the only damn thing over there that is.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: That was not, however, what I was asking the Minister.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, quite apart from the fact that the reason for the increase in trade is the deep depression that we are in, and quite apart from the fact that we are not importing, what about the advertisement? What about the hundreds of thousands of dollars that go to pay for an eight-page full advertisement which does nothing more than pat the Minister on the back and pat the Government on the back? Are we to expect this kind of thing? What about the activities of the Minister of Transport and those of other Ministers? The expenditure of taxpayers' dollars on this kind of trashy advertisement—is this the kind of thing we can expect from now until the election?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I have not seen that ad, and I will have a look at it.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Regan: I want to say to the Hon. Member through you, Sir, that I consider an ad of that type in relation to what we are doing and what we can do in exports—

Mr. Nielsen: Remember you have not seen it.

Mr. Regan: —to be tremendously important.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Regan: Let me tell the Hon. Member very briefly why. As well as we are doing in exports, we can do a great deal better if we can get an orientation by more companies and more businessmen in this country toward exports, to recognize what is being done, and how, in product after product, we are successfully competing with the best in the world, outdoing the United States in telecommunications exports, in relation to mass transit equipment, and in many other fields, but unfortunately we do not yet have enough companies here in this country that are aggressively developing our export markets. That ad helps to bring the importance of that to their attention. I hope that you will review your position and agree—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I must remind the Hon. Minister to address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. McDermid: You had hair when that picture was taken, Gerry.

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FISHERIES

WHITE COAT SEAL HUNT—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans but in his absence I will address it to his Parliamentary Secretary. The Parliamentary Secretary will know that the Conservative Party, through its official critic, the Hon. Member for South Shore, has asked the Government of Canada on several occasions in the last few weeks to impose a ban on the white coat hunt for seals. The Parliamentary Secretary should also know that yesterday in Newfoundland the Minister of Fisheries for that province publicly disagreed with that policy and publicly complained that neither he nor anyone else in the industry or in the Province was consulted.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary tell this House, and more importantly assure fishermen, assure industry players, assure provincial Governments with whom we need to consult to have a successful fishery policy in this country, that this Government will not be acting arbitrarily and will not have a knee-jerk reaction to a policy which I am told does not even meet with the approval of the Hon. Member for St. John's West?

● (1450)

Mr. Maurice Harquail (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member, all Members of the House and all Canadians, will know that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has strongly defended the industry and fishermen in this country. His statements have been very consistent and he has not given into threats or blackmail on this issue. The Hon. Member is quite correct in