

Oral Questions

Mr. Axworthy: They did not say adequate, they did not say effective, they said a binding mechanism, which is very different language from what the Government is now using.

Can we get a guarantee from the Government that it will not sign or initial any agreement that does not include a binding dispute mechanism? Not the adequate one the Minister is talking about, but a binding mechanism that would require the United States to accept those solutions, rather than simply having more of the kinds of concessionary consultations that we have now?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said on many occasions that there will be no deal unless it is a good deal for Canada.

Mr. Axworthy: Binding or not?

Mr. Gauthier: You are backing away.

Mr. Mazankowski: A comprehensive trade arrangement without an adequate dispute resolving mechanism certainly would not be considered as an adequate deal for Canada.

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THE CONSTITUTION**MEECH LAKE ACCORD—APPOINTMENT OF SUPREME COURT JUDGES**

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Deputy Prime Minister. Yesterday the Minister of Justice was asked by me whether it was deliberate or an accident that there was no provision for the Territories to submit names for consideration for appointment to the Senate and the Supreme Court of Canada under the Meech Lake Accord. He refused to answer the question on the grounds that there was a court case in which the grievance of the Territories was being considered.

If the court case is that important, will the Minister of Justice agree that the ratification of the Accord should wait until that court case is settled and the Minister can answer the question?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I think this is probably the first time in my parliamentary career that I have been accused of obfuscation.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: No? Maybe it is the second time, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: As the Hon. Member knows, there is adequate precedent with respect to the political proceedings going on, notwithstanding the fact that there are matters before the court.

I only refer by way of example to the fact that in the time in which Mr. Trudeau—you will remember him, I think—was the Prime Minister, he had, in fact, put forward a reference to the Supreme Court of Canada with respect to the Senate and the powers of the Senate. This did not preclude us from carrying on political responsibilities.

The matter is before the courts. It will be dealt with there. It seems to me it has been dealt with rather expeditiously at this point in time. At the same time I take it that the Member speaks on behalf of his Party, hoping that we will move forward with the Meech Lake Accord to ratify this most important Accord for Canada.

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the Minister of Justice that Mr. Trudeau also took political responsibility for what he was doing.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Never.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL DECISION

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, in this case the Minister of Justice and the Government are not telling us whether this grievance of the Territories is the result of a deliberate decision that they not be allowed to put lists forward or whether that was an oversight. It is a simple question. The grievance before the court has nothing to do with it. Why can't the Minister just answer the question?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is one of the members of the joint committee dealing with this important issue. He has a daily opportunity to question witnesses, speaking to the spokespersons on behalf of the Government, with respect to any aspect of this matter he cares to raise.

With respect to this particular issue, I have answered it adequately. I have said to the Hon. Member that we take the position that the Accord is a good one for Canada. I hope the Hon. Member is not trying to change the position of the Liberal Party to support this wholeheartedly, notwithstanding representations to the contrary.

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DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION**REPORTS ON OPERATIONS AND FINANCIAL CONTROL**

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister in the absence of the Prime Minister.