

Oral Questions

Mr. Riis: Look whose talking.

Ms. Copps: You signed the agreement.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Yes, I signed the agreement. I say to the Hon. Member from Hamilton that I did sign the agreement. That is what I wish to quote from rather than from what the Americans may have said, or from what we have said. Let's go to the truth. Let us go to the agreement.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Who has got the real agreement?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The agreement states that we will continue to screen, and we set out the thresholds of screening. We also say that the parties agree that all existing laws, regulations, and published policies and practices not in conformity with any of the obligations described in the agreement shall be grandfathered. The protections that we have had in the banking system, in transportation, in energy, in culture, all of these will continue to be protected by the agreement, not by anybody's interpretation.

[Translation]

INQUIRY WHY GOVERNMENT PERMITTED PUBLICATION OF A DOCUMENT PRESUMED FALSE

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, if we look at the document to which the Minister is referring it becomes clear who is telling the truth . . . I would very strongly suggest that the United States is telling the truth in this case because, on page 24 of his document, it is clearly indicated that after the third year following the signature of this agreement there will no longer be any kind of investment review concerning what they call the review of an indirect acquisition.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking the Minister of Finance why he allowed the Prime Minister's Office to publish a false document.

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I agree with what the Hon. Member states that for indirect acquisitions after the third year there will be no review. For direct acquisitions there will be review. This illustrates a fundamental difference.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): What value?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The Hon. Member for Windsor West will never understand the response that I am going to give now, so I will direct it to the Hon. Member for Laval-des-Rapides.

Mr. Foster: Don't be sanctimonious.

Mr. Axworthy: That is because you are never very clear.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): What this does is demonstrate the difference between his Party and this Government.

Mr. Tobin: The difference between your statement and the American agreement.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): We are saying that this country must become more outward looking, more forward looking, and not look inward and into the past.

There is a significant amount of Canadian investment going to the United States these days because people do not have the confidence that we have the access to the U.S. market. For that reason, investments are being made in the United States rather than in Canada.

This agreement will give them that confidence, they will invest their money in Canada, creating a stronger Canadian economy and moving forward.

AGRICULTURE—ELIMINATION OF SUBSIDIES

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, the document tabled by the Prime Minister today states that the parties have agreed "to achieve, on a global basis, the elimination of all subsidies which distort agricultural trade and agree to work together to achieve this goal".

Have the Americans now agreed to cease selling their grain into world markets, and into the Canadian market, at less than half the cost of production? If so, how soon, and what assurances do we have with respect to this?

• (1450)

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, this is one of the many achievements which will benefit Canadian agriculture in the bilateral trade arrangement.

I am sure the Hon. Member knows that our most urgent and pressing problem in Canadian agriculture is the state of Canadian grains and oilseeds as a result of the continuing high level of support by the U.S. and the EEC, and the trade war continuing between the two.

This is a commitment to consult with us prior to extending the Export Enhancement Program into our traditional markets. It is also a commitment to work with us to bring about some common sense and some sanity in the international market-place through working together in the multinational trade negotiations.

Mr. Althouse: An agreement to talk.

WESTERN GRAIN TRANSPORTATION SUBSIDIES

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, as well, the agreement tabled today talks about Canada agreeing to eliminate its Western Grain Transportation Act subsidies on agricultural products shipped to the U.S. through western Canadian ports.

Why did Canada give up this last vestige of the Crow rate? Does this mean the end of a subsidy and the end of a program which have existed in this country for nearly 90 years?