

Oral Questions

"Don't be silly, in Oshawa we prefer steak and New England lobster by candle-light. And, Howard, remember to buy your Ministers a new car every year."

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

TRADE**BRITISH COLUMBIA WINE INDUSTRY—EFFECT OF CANADA-UNITED STATES TRADE AGREEMENT**

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we all know that the Prime Minister sold out Canadian interests to American interests.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: Oh, sit down!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): What I want to know today is why the Minister for International Trade, who is from British Columbia, sold out British Columbia interests to California.

On August 14 the Minister wrote to the chairman of the B.C. Grape Marketing Board and these were her words:

I am very much aware that the grape industry has some unique characteristics... If policy changes affecting the grape industry do result from the Canada-U.S. trade agreement, they will only occur slowly and after full consultation with all segments of the industry.

The Minister broke her word. Under this Conservative sell-out, 50 per cent of the protection accorded to the B.C. wine industry will expire within the first year. In the words of the grape growers, this will cause the premature death of a Canadian industry.

Why did the Minister break her word to the British Columbia grape growers? Why did she break her word to the British Columbia wine industry? Why did she break her word to the people of the Okanagan Valley?

• (1420)

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I deny the allegations made by the Right Hon. Member about breaking my word. If anyone has broken anything, it is he who has broken faith with the Canadian people through his tactics in opposition to free trade. What the Hon. Member is doing on this issue is scandalous.

With regard to the wine industry, several spokesmen for that industry have said that they are looking forward to an opportunity to compete in the U.S. market. They believe that they make good Canadian wine and that those good Canadian wine products will find markets in the United States.

Secondly, I wish to point out to him that our other trading partners have taken Canada to the GATT on the issue of discriminatory price mark-ups that this issue has been protected behind and the case is currently before the GATT.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, that reply certainly does not indicate that the Minister is any advocate of the British Columbia wine industry.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is a sad day when the Minister politically responsible for British Columbia sells out British Columbia in order to keep the Prime Minister happy. The B.C. Grape Marketing Board and the Association of B.C. Grape Growers have told their members in a recent communication:

All of our segment of the industry is now at risk of disappearing almost immediately.

What does the Minister now say to the British Columbia grape growers, the British Columbia farmers, and the British Columbia vineyard workers since she did not have the guts to stand up for their interests?

Will the Minister explain to the people of the Okanagan Valley why the wine industry was sacrificed while the beer industry was protected?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, rather than being non-supportive of this industry we used British Columbia wines at the Commonwealth Conference.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Miss Carney: I know that the Opposition objects to the practice of supporting the wine industry. People in the wine industry have said that they believe that their good wines will sell well. We have faith in the Canadian product on international markets.

The Prime Minister has said repeatedly that everything necessary will be done to assist those grape growers who cannot adjust. However, it is too early to write an obituary for that industry.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether the British Columbia wine industry would like to be the sport for the last supper of the Conservative Party in British Columbia.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

OKANAGAN VALLEY WORKERS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, does the Minister not recognize that over 20,000 Canadians work in the grape-growing and wine industry? I have recently received submissions from and had meetings