

Oral Questions

ARGENTINA—NUCLEAR ENERGY AGREEMENT

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Madam Speaker, Canada ended nuclear co-operation with Pakistan in 1976 when they refused to accept full safeguards in connection with our nuclear reactor in Karachi, but we still have Canadian technicians working on a Candu nuclear reactor in Argentina; we are still shipping them nuclear fuel bundles; we are still co-operating with them in the nuclear sense even though they have threatened to construct nuclear weapons.

Could the Prime Minister explain to the House the apparent contradiction between our policy with respect to Argentina and the policy he says we are still going to implement with respect to Pakistan?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): If I understand the Hon. Member correctly, Madam Speaker, he is supporting the position this Government took in the past as regards nuclear and non-nuclear co-operation with Pakistan. I am grateful to him for having reminded the House of that.

As far as Argentina is concerned, it is another case which has been answered in detail by the present Minister of Justice when he was Secretary of State for External Affairs. Just to refresh the Hon. Member's memory, it had to do with the fact that if we were unilaterally to denounce our agreement with Argentina now, then we would be doing away with all safeguards. They are bound by the safeguards agreement we have now. Since the first signing of agreements in the early 1970s we have attempted to heighten the level of those safeguards and we have not been successful in every case. But to follow the course advocated by the Hon. Member would mean that there would be no safeguards at all with the material and the technology which has already been transferred to Argentina.

● (1450)

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO BRANDT COMMISSION STATEMENT

Mr. Bob Ogle (Saskatoon East): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Yesterday afternoon there were two groups of people here. One came representing the churches of Canada, seven national leaders, and at the same time Dr. Brandt from Germany and his commissioners were in the House of Commons. I think that was a very significant event. I feel that both came speaking with a prophetic voice.

This morning the Brandt Commission made a statement which called for urgent action to discuss means to increase world—

Madam Speaker: Order, order. The Hon. Member should be asking a question, not quoting from a report.

Mr. Ogle: I would like to ask the Prime Minister, without that much preparation, whether he is prepared at this moment to give a short answer on how he reacts to the Brandt statement this morning asking for greater liquidity, to reverse the decline in world trade and to alleviate the mounting burden of

debt around the world? Does he have a feeling about how Canada can respond?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I know Members of Parliament had the privilege of discussing all these subjects with Mr. Brandt and his colleagues, and I discussed them with them the previous day. I think the Hon. Member knows that Canada has been responding and has been taking positions which the Brandt Commission recognizes as showing the proper kind of leadership. Naturally they would want us to do more.

Mr. Brandt and his colleagues suggested the convening of a Cancun-type conference and were very profuse in their congratulations to Canada for having played a leading role in the Cancun Conference. If the Hon. Member is really trying to find out whether Canada is on the same wavelength as the Brandt Commission, the answer is that we have been saying for a long while that the North-South problems are very grave and that they are linked not only to the peace of the world but to economic recovery. We have been saying that. We believe that, but it does not mean that we can give Mr. Brandt or any other organization a blank cheque on the future.

COMMITTEE STUDY OF NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS

Mr. Bob Ogle (Saskatoon East): Madam Speaker, the House of Commons is changing its rules at this time. Would the Prime Minister be willing to ask the Government to set up a Standing Committee to study the North-South question steadily, the same way the Brandt Commission has extended itself?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, we just had a task force of the House, chaired by, I believe, the Hon. Member for Gloucester, which issued a report on this very subject. I think the findings of that task force are still worthy of interest, and certainly they have been studied by the Government in determining its policies.

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THE ECONOMY

GOVERNMENT DEFICIT—MINISTER'S POSITION

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. This morning there were reports in the newspapers which indicated that the Minister is changing his position on the size of the federal Government's deficit for the purpose of funding direct job-creation programs. This comes at a time when the deficit is at the particularly high level of 40 per cent of federal Government revenues.

Would the Minister explain to the House why he is reversing himself on this and considering a further increase in the size of the deficit, rather than encouraging Canadians across the country to create jobs through tax incentives designed to generate about as much revenue as the apparent tax costs would be?